FILM

REALIST FILM UNIT

has now completed three films of major social importance, on Education, Smoke Abatement, and The League of Nations.

REALIST FILM UNIT

has collaborated with Victor Saville Productions on a film in aid of the Basque Children.

REALIST FILM UNIT

has now in production three more films, to be completed by the end of the year. They will be directed by Basil Wright, A.R.F.P., Stuart Legg, A.R.F.P., and John Taylor, A.R.F.P.

REALIST FILM UNIT

has formed a Scottish section to aid in the presentation of Scotland's Life and Industry on the screen. Mr. John Grierson has consented to guide the policy of this section, and wherever possible Scottish directors and cameramen will be encouraged.

REALIST FILM UNIT, 34 SOHO SQUARE, W.1

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FOR 1937

The Gas Industry presents a programme selected from the following films, ready in the Autumn

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A FILM ABOUT MR THERM Here he is in a new comedy, playing a detective part for the first time on the screen. Plenty of excitement and plenty of laughs, with music and a song which everybody will enjoy.

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KENSAL HOUSE Here is something entirely new in England. It is a model housing estate, complete with Nursery School and Tenants' Club, designed by five eminent architects. There are delightful pictures of the children in the Nursery School. Some of the tenants describe what life is like there and show you round the flats.

and two new cooking films

HOW TO COOK With Marcel Boulestin

MILK COOKERY With a talented cow

Anyone who would like a film show arranged, or who wishes to borrow copies of the films, should write to the British Commercial Gas Association, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1, if outside London, or the Gas Light and Coke Company, Horseferry Road, S.W.1, for London

world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

VOL. 2 NO. 6 PRICE: ONE SHILLING SEPTEMBER 1937

"THEY SAID I WAS CRAZY"

—VON STROHEIM

INTRODUCING "The Man You Love to Hate,"—Erich von Stroheim, the meteor in the celluloid constellations, the man who dared portray the senility of Central European royalty in the *Merry Widow*, the sophisticated pulse of the modern world in *Foolish Wives* and the *Blind Husbands* and the sordid world of Mammon in what was probably his masterpiece, *Greed*.

A relatively short time has elapsed since then, though long and eventful in the young history of the screen. Names have come and gone. What has happened to von Stroheim in that time?

To-day he speaks, but without the fire and enthusiasm of a man searching for new horizons. That fine creative *dæmon* seems somehow hushed.

"I am only an actor trying to get together some money," he says. And he talks mainly of the past, lashing out at the people and methods of the Hollywood scheme of things.

"I'm not frightened of talking. I say print everything. I was an outcast in Hollywood. I never had a swimming-pool and other elaborate things. I lived and I told the truth. But I was called a wastrel, a spendthrift. The dog was given a bad name, and it stuck.

"In 44th Street on Times Square there was the biggest sign in the world during the making of *Foolish Wives*. That was the birth certificate of Universal and my tombstone. In electric lights the production costs were advertised as being a million dollars. They said it was the first million dollar motion picture. It was a publicity scheme to put Universal on the map. Overhead charges rivalled the production costs. I was the scapegoat.

"But in *Foolish Wives* I started a new school in films, the real axis of things, love and sex which had been overlooked by producers who treated the public as infants. It was new and shocked the meddlers, people who had no sex outlet themselves. Freud has a name for them. As part of the publicity campaign, Universal invited twenty-two censors to come free of charge to Hollywood to view *Foolish Wives*. They came with their scissors. These people, some petty shyster politicians, drunk with their own importance, came, looked—and cut.

"Irving Thalberg as the personal representative of Carl Laemmle discharged me in the middle of making *Merry-Go-Round*. This was the young man who did not know anything about films then, but had initiative. I was broken-hearted.

"I then worked for the Goldwyn company who let me make *Greed*. I thought people after the Great War were ripe for corned beef and not chocolate éclairs, so I chose to make this film from a novel by Frank Norris. Norris was a disciple of Zola and the school of realism he had dreamed of. I worked nine months on the film and then the Goldwyn company merged when I was cutting. It became Metro - Goldwyn - Mayer. Irving Thalberg again popped up, having joined the company. My film was taken away from me, and I was out. It was given to a thirty-dollar-a-week cutter. I have not seen *Greed* myself."

To use von Stroheim's own words the case against him "was mounting like an avalanche."

"They (presumably the executives) hate people with positive minds. No twelve people can write a book or paint a work of art. My success was that I did everything myself, and it did have the stamp of personality. I was the first to use trucking shots. I was the first to use polished floors, real glass windows and silks. They said I was crazy. Nasty and malicious stories were told about me. I could take no action; they knew I had no money. But I didn't want to, anyway; it would mean putting myelf on the same level as themselves. I have my own mind, and that is the worst thing I can say about myself."

In a scheme of things where yes-men flourish, it is logical that the independent spirit should be stoned. Yet they who cast the stones were themselves not innocent of the things von Stroheim was accused of. It is interesting to note that this man about whom the legend grew that he was the prince of spendthrifts, a legend that was partially responsible in hounding him to an undeserved destiny, actually made films that were huge box-office successes. The first film which he made for Carl Laemmle, *Blind Husbands*, made nearly a million dollars profit. *The Merry Widow* cleared about four million dollars.

Comparative obscurity, however, does not lessen the perpetual interest that the advance-guard film circles have in von Stroheim. It is known that one of the heads of the Soviet film industry said to him: "You are to us in Russia what Moses was to the Israelites. We show your *Greed* to all our young directors."

Spasmodically voices are raised sometimes in protest at the treatment meted out to him.

And his future?

"Perhaps one day I will direct a picture again. In France or in England."

Was it rumoured that he would go to Russia to make films?

"Yes. Eisenstein tried to get me to go to Russia. It is a question of my family, though. I can't take any money out of Russia, and my family does not want to go. For myself, I would like to go."

The same impressive stance, the colour and gravitational power of a great personality. A click of the heels. A suggestion of a salute.

"Goodbye, Mr. von Stroheim."

"Goodbye."

To the observer it seems that like a very sensitive spirit he must needs live in the past, dreaming of those short-lived and almost violently stirring triumphs that made film history.

Leslie Perkoff

Theatregoers—Good and Bad

By JAMES BRIDIE

WE are told that the Theatre Audience is one thing and the Cinema Audience another; but everybody who can walk is the Cinema Audience, so the Theatre Audience is part of the Cinema Audience. It is a specialised part. Everybody knows how to look at photographs and it is, therefore, very easy to appreciate the conventions of moving photographs. When perception has become almost automatic, the mind is free to pick up something extra. That is why I was once astonished at a Glasgow cinema audience who were watching a pictorial story about a young law student who had fallen in love with a gypsy. He was so excited by this state that his work suffered and his mother had to speak to him very, very seriously. After a scene rivalling in honest emotion the Closet Scene in *Hamlet*, the boy said, "I am in a whirl. I gotta go outside and cool my brain." In a moment he was shown sitting down on a cold doorstep. There was a sudden, spontaneous, universal yell of laughter from the audience.

A theatre audience would not have reacted in that fashion unless it had been guying the play from the beginning. There would have been small outbursts here and there, silenced by indignant hushing from the majority who had not seen anything funny in the incident.

The conventions of the Theatre are more difficult than those of the Cinema. Audiences do not immediately accept them unless they are highly trained. They have to make a continuous effort of the imagination to hold on to their illusion. For example, they are seeing real people on the stage; but these people are framed in a gilt frame, they have painted faces, they are lit in a peculiar way, what they do after they leave the stage has to be constructed by the spectator out of his own imagination and a piece of obviously canvas backing representing a garden beyond a window doesn't do much to help him to visualise lawns, flowerbeds and terraces beyond and out of immediate sight. The cinema would show him the garden; and the people in it would be exactly like the people in his daily illustrated newspaper, animated by movement.

This necessity for effort in the theatre naturally divides audiences into classes. We have good, bad and indifferent audiences, quite sharply defined. In the cinema, they tend to a dead level. It also makes a stage play a more stimulating experience than a film play of the same quality. Mr. St. John Ervine, in the course of a not very well informed diatribe against the cinema, made one point when he said that playgoers came out of a theatre chattering and excited and cinemagoers emerged silent and with a jaded aspect.

BEFORE I carry the comparison further, I should like to examine the three classes of audience in the theatre.

Good and indifferent audiences may both be composed of intelligent people; or, to be exact, have sufficient intelligent people among them to leaven the damned lump. Different authorities have different views as to the proportion in which intelligence is distributed in any given audience. Some say that forty per cent have not the remotest idea what the antics within the illuminated rectangle are about. Others say eighty per cent. Most competent dramatists and producers bear this percentage in mind when they are making a play. They pepper their play at intervals with oaths, physical accidents, the spectacle of gay clothes and underclothes, jokes that the audience has heard at its mother's knee. Such jokes are "prepared" so that the audience can see them rolling down the hill. They are greeted with applause. The best example of the boiled chestnut known to me will be found in the last act of *What Every Woman Knows*, when the audience is cynically prepared to receive the injunction to the electorate to "Vote for Shand and damn the flowing tide." The passage is always met with tremendous laughter and hand-clapping.

When everything has been done to keep this extraordinary part of the audience interested, one still admires the courtesy and patience that keeps them in their seats throughout what must be, for them, a very dull business. For all this courtesy and patience, there are times when, incited by the example of the "indifferent" group, they get out of hand. They are then a bad audience. They eat, they whisper, they giggle, they explain to each other what they conceive to be the plot, they lose their heads when an animal comes on the stage, they breathe on the back of one's neck, they blow the fumes of shag or even proud cigars into the faces of ladies, they argue with programme sellers halfway through the first act, they bang seats and tread on corns and arrive, in the darkness, at the wrong place, they rustle papers, they upset teacups, they laugh rudely when an actor kisses an actress, they light matches to read their programmes, they shout in the foyers, they go to sleep, they get drunk, they cough, they display with pride their ignorance of the age-long customs of the theatre, of the art of drama, and of civilised manners. A popular success, no matter how good a play it may happen to be or how well produced and acted, will always attract, at some time or another, this horrifying mob.

The indifferent audience is the one in which "sophisticated" people abound. Now a Sophist, according to Aristotle, is a "pretender to knowledge, a man who employs what he knows to be fallacy for the purpose of deceit and of getting money." Sophistication is, according to the Dictionary, the act of adulterating or, alternatively, the art of quibbling. These adulterers and quibblers well deserve their adjective. The odd thing is that they are as proud of it as the mob theatregoers are of their brutish behaviour.

Be that as it may, they do not make a good audience. They are either wealthy or pretending to be wealthy and these occupations make a great and continuous call on the attention. Many a good play has gone cold and flat to a full house because these nasty exhibitionists have felt it their duty to be present.

A good audience is a splendid thing. It sits well forward on its seats. It is responsive, but it not only takes but gives. I have seen a hard-bitten actor reeling off the stage in tears, looking as Saul must have looked when he resumed his journey to Damascus, because the passion of a good audience had come across the footlights like a silent hurricane and taught him that his job of speaking another man's words was better than he thought it.

I HAVE hinted at a doubt whether the cinema can ever give a good audience what it deserves and what we should all like to give it. Two or three things it can do. It can make these people laugh; it can let them see common things with another man's eye; it can outline for them great issues. It can do these things at the same time as it is providing the mob with photographs of its loved ones. The good audience will not be content with weekly meals of sawdust, and it is a question whether it is worth the trouble of retaining it by putting a few valuables in the lucky dip. I think it is. The good audience is very solid, reliable and loyal. Suppose a counter-attraction to the cinema. Let us say huge beer gardens with a band and a strip-tease cabaret. If those days come the exhibitors will be glad of a bunch of adherents who will drag at least some of the silly sheep ever back to the fold.

As to the sophisticates, I hope I have made it plain that they are not a good audience and never will be. They write a good deal and some poor fellows of producers seem to read what they write. This is a great mistake.

EDITORIAL

Films and the Nation

THE proposals by which the British Government hope to encourage the growth of the native cinema during the next decade have been published. Both renters and exhibitors will be required to carry an increasing percentage of British made films. To prevent alien exploiters from meeting their legal obligations at the lowest possible cost by the production of dirt cheap, or "quickie" films, a minimum labour cost of seven thousand five hundred pounds must be expended on films which are to rank for Quota. These are the principal conditions. Except for the minimum cost clause and a preferential treatment of luxury films there is no fundamental change from the old Act under which the British cinema has careered to its present state of disaster.

Since the passing of the Cinematograph Act of 1927 we have seen one wave of swindle and mis-government succeed another. Public money has been subscribed in quantity for films which either failed to emerge or were so grossly mismanaged that a return on capital was from the first unlikely. The Government has looked blankly on, while foreign entrepreneurs in the production of quickie films over-drove our technicians and finally broke the spirit of men who might have done much for Britain on the screen. A wave of foreign invasion was permitted under the excuse of teaching our nationals though no attempt was made to see that this instruction of nationals was a real condition of employment. So long as the requisite amount of film footage was produced, no one cared under what conditions or in what quality production took place.

Much has been forgiven the British Board of Trade, and the Government behind it, on the ground that a body of experience had to be built up in a new and difficult field before effective administration was possible. But it was expected that ten years would be sufficient and that, in any further intervention, a real effort would be made to co-ordinate the industry and save the country from further scandal. The Board of Trade, it must be confessed, has again taken the lazy way out. There is nothing in the new proposals—perhaps purposely so—which second-rate clerks could not, by measuring rule, administer. No constructive control of conditions and qualities of production is envisaged.

The needs of the situation go beyond the commercial interests of any particular section of the film industry. In the ultimate the only interest that matters is the national interest and the encouragement of those creative elements in the film trade which are likely to serve that interest. On this fundamental ground three criticisms are offered on the Board of Trade's proposals. The first, made by Mr. Ostrer, is that no distinction is drawn between American pictures made in Britain and British pictures made in Britain and that, in fact, the sorry system of American controlled British production will persist. The second criticism is that the relatively high cost test of seven thousand five hundred pounds minimum on labour costs bears hardly on the independent producer and prevents initiative outside a few commercial rings. The third criticism is that by limiting the shorts Quota to five per cent no incentive is given to a field of production in which much useful national work and valuable creative apprenticeship is being carried on. These criticisms have plainly a single common denominator: a demand that the Government shall adopt a more constructive role and that it shall use its power to direct the development of a great national asset.

To all such criticisms the Board of Trade replies that an Advisory Committee will be set up to take care of exceptions. That Advisory Committee has, in the past, been drawn from majority interests in the film trade who, bound to the most hard-boiled traditions of commercialism, did not invariably represent either national or creative interests. This situation is to persist.

Is the Government to abandon the film industry to a further period of commercial anarchy? Or is it to seize the opportunity of bringing the industry into something like national focus? The Moyne Committee suggested the latter policy, and so have all reputable critics. We expect Parliament to agree with them.

Every Reader can serve this paper and the progressive forces of the cinema by getting a new subscriber.

Religious Film Schism

THE announcement that Mr. Bruce Woolfe is to provide a series of religious film programmes marks the first step in what may become the most important development of the so-called 'non-theatrical' cinema. The churches have some fifty thousand halls which can be devoted to religious and social education by film. If even a proportion of these are so used they must become a new and vital force in articulating the public mind and a powerful complement to the influence of the commercial cinema.

Conflict is inevitable, however, between two parties in the counsels of the church. The first party regards the film as a medium through which their present somewhat unimaginative teaching of the Scriptures can be more widely spread. They hanker after films of the Gospel stories, without apparent concern for the virtue which must so often be lost when the highly polarised message of the Scriptures is transferred to powder and paint. There is also a tendency to choose stories which, while praising the more visible forms of worship and conversion, leave some considerable doubt as to the taste and quality of either.

The opposing school of thought, with whom Mr. Bruce Woolfe is by record and sympathy identified, is impressed by the value of cinema in community work and social education, and particularly in the service of youth. It points to the more startling possibility of making dramatic films of the world's greatest short stories and adding their spiritual message to the curriculum of religious experience. This is the real import of the announcement made by Mr. Bruce Woolfe, and Mr. Rank is to be congratulated on arranging so excellent a departure. The work of the Church will be enriched and it is assured in fiction of an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

From a more general point of view, it is important to note that finance is made available for film work which has been conceived from the first in spiritual terms. Ambitious young directors will not fail to avail themselves of so unique and brilliant an opportunity. They must be prepared, however, to fight a difficult battle, for the Peter and Paul school will feel they are getting less than their due if the message is not "direct." Religious film makers should arm themselves with the text of Matthew seven and twenty-one. The danger is that in much emphasis of the formal aspects of religion, goodness may easily fly out of the window. Goodness, we believe, includes good cinema.

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Cover still: Miriam Hopkins in *Woman Chases Man*

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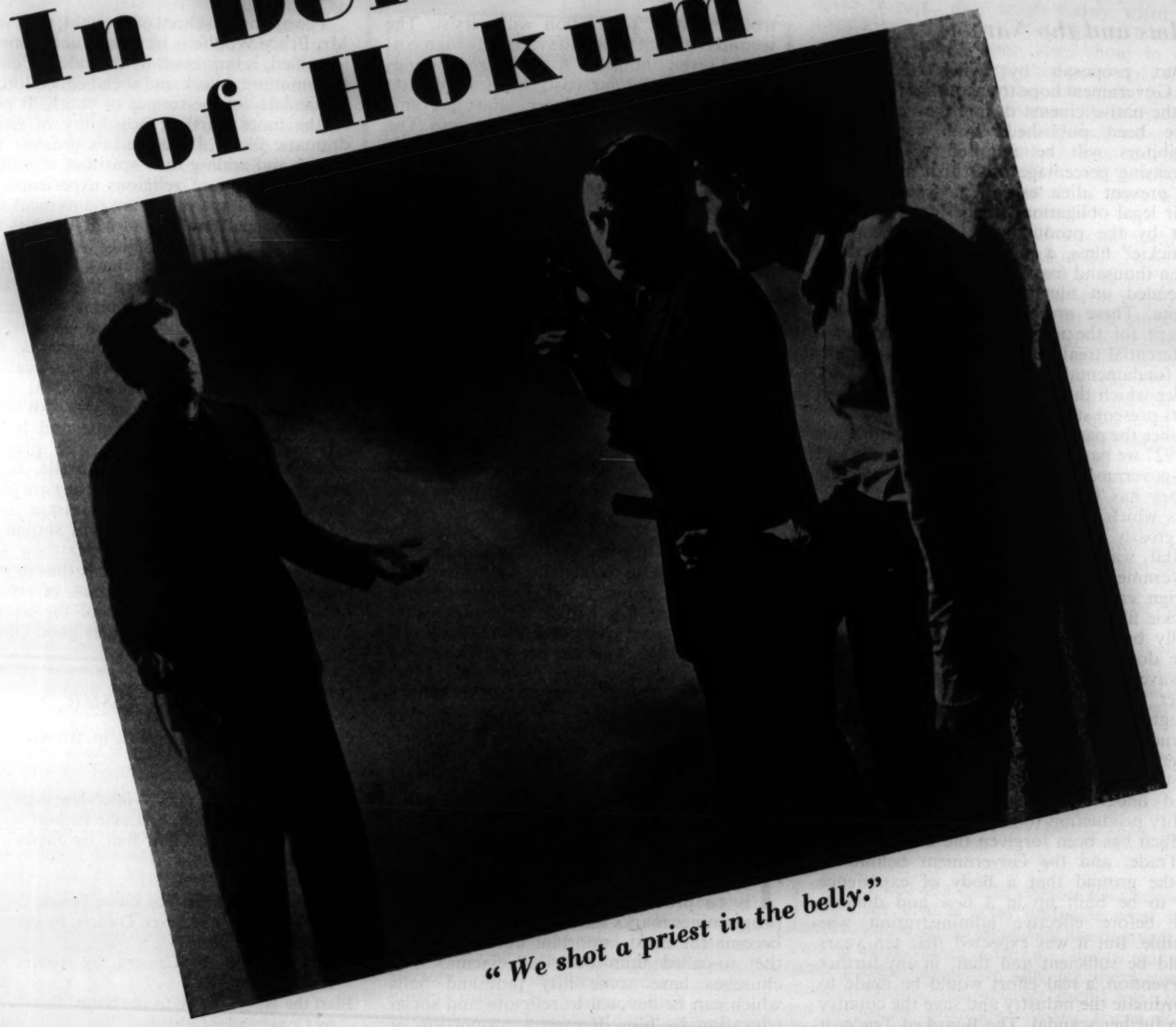
In Defence of Hokum



"We shot a priest in the belly."

SPEAKING of hokum always reminds me of the town strumpet. And that always reminds me of Grandpa, because I stole the line from him. Grandpa had the right idea about hokum. "Hokum," he always used to say as he dangled me over his knee and read me Frank Merriwell, "is like the town strumpet. Nobody will admit knowing her; but nobody's not known her—if you will pardon the double negative."

What I'm trying to say is that no Hollywood writer will ever admit he injects the hokum hypodermic into his delicate brain babies. Yet should he fail to hop them up with a couple of pleasure bindles, they'd die of the dreaded Hollywood disease—Box-Office Anæmia.

Then he'd be forced to give up his self-filtering swimming pool with the cupids along the edge, those intellectual Sunday evenings at the Trocadero, necking his stenographer, his valley ranch with badminton court and rumpus room, and go back to writing punctuationless verse for the magazines.

I'll go still further. Were Hollywood suddenly to stop lushing up its assorted product with hokum, the producers would have to close the joint and turn it back to its original owners—the most shiftless, worthless tribe of Real Estate Indians that ever lived—who, I understand, don't want it anyway.

Rashly I shall attempt to prove all this. First, let me say I haven't the slightest idea what hokum is, except that I know circuses don't flop and "terrific," "stupendous," "colossal" still sell tickets. Aside from that, press me to the wall with a gun in my ribs, threaten to tear up my contract if I don't tell, and I'd say hokum was a deliberate attempt to assault an audience sitting helplessly and without defence with well known, time-tried theatrical devices that nauseate George Jean Nathan.

These include such items as the Chase, the Spectacle, Mother Love, the Heavy Father, the Boy and Girl, the Marines to the Rescue, the Gigantic Catastrophe. These and sundry other dramatic gadgets calculated to jog the nerves agreeably, rouse the flush of tears to the sentimental eye, titillate the well known animal sense, or in some way drench the sitter in inartistic glucosity. All with one of the writer's eyes on the box-office and the other on a second Duesenberg.

Gene Towne, one-time cow-puncher and lumberjack, gagman and title-writer of the silent days, is now one of Hollywood's most colourful and prolific scenarists.

Part author of *The Case Against Mrs. Ames*, *History is Made at Night*, and *You Only Live Once*, he has just completed *Stand-in*, and *Ali Baba Goes to Town*.

In this article, published by courtesy of the American 'Stage,' Towne defends Hokum . . 'The brick of writing . . it is as necessary as the uninteresting foundations of a house . . the secret is to hide it.'

★ ★ ★

WHICH brings to mind, for purposes of argument, the attitude of a certain cynical friend of mine who shall be nameless —Ted Shane. This harmless gentleman will pick up a phone book and say, "This wouldn't make a bad picture if you could only get a Boy and Girl in it!" Mr. Shane repeats this jape *ad nauseam* with Marx's *Das Kapital*, *Warren on Tumors*, and the *Social Register*.

Now funnily enough this is a most unfunny remark—because it's true. It is my certain belief that were some producer struck by the screen possibilities of these four peculiar and important works of literature he could and would make pictures of them.

Were the hokum he inserted in them excellent, he'd have excellent (successful) pictures. Fact is, I myself think they're great screen material. The stage has furnished more difficult things to adapt. There's even a way of lumping them all into one colossal that should do three weeks at the Music Hall:

"A social-registered Miss—the richest girl in the world, of course—has read Karl Marx but not understood him—as who does. Anxious to learn about the collapse of the muddleclass she decides to install a four-party line so she can listen in on three lower-class neighbours, picked at random from the phone book.

"A young phone company man arrives to install the phone. They fall in love with each other immediately but naturally fight like hell because she wants to rise to the level of the lower classes, and he wants to sink to the level of the upper classes. He wants to get out of the phone book into the *Social Register*.

"Naturally both families oppose the marriage—we'll get the reason later. Now I'm just thinking out loud—throw in an operation on the rich father's tumour, performed with the phone lad's emergency kit—everybody forgives everybody else. The picture plays six weeks at the Music Hall instead of three, and the trade papers run ads with quotes."

And if you don't think that'd make a great picture you're crazy. It has everything it takes —and you can always throw in a night club, a few musical numbers, and an earthquake to plug any of the story holes, if there are any.

When Romeo met Juliet Hollywood had its first brick laid and when they threw in a mother's tear and a big train wreck and discovered the night club, it was finally completed. Hokum is the brick of writing. It is as necessary as the dull, uninteresting foundations of a house. The secret is to hide it.

A decorator swishes a piece of taffeta, and fools you. A pastry chef uses different coloured icings—white frosting would taste just the same. A screen writer hops up his hokum bricks with hanky-panky and magoozlum that laughingly goes under the head of story treatment.

If I were to step into the office of my cultured and intelligent employer, Walter Wanger, and say, "Walter, I've got a great idea for a picture. It hasn't a night club in it, there are no dance numbers on a winding staircase, it is vacant of heart interest, boy fails to meet girl; in fact neither appears, et cetera, et cetera"—the good man would throw me out.

In other words, producers are forced to make pictures for a man who lives with his wife and eight kids in one room over a garage and goes to the movies on relief money. Show a guy like that something about the problems of his own fate and he'll spend your tax money on a new Packard. And justifiably so.

Hokum is only as successful as a magician's unknown trick. He mystifies you while he hacks the woman in half, or deals you a pat flush from a deck of cards securely wrapped in cellophane and bearing the label on the reverse side, "American Novelties, Inc."

But once this guy lets you in on the secret he's as dead as the *Police Gazette*. Maybe that answers the question the little man in the back row just put to me as to what kind of hokum audiences want these days. I'd say offhand the kind that gives them a quick ticket out of reality.

They want to get away from communism, fascism, sudden Sunday death, overdrawn accounts, and radio commercials. That's why they swarm into the cinema cathedral and wallow in incredibility. They want to identify themselves with the people on the screen.

NOT that I'm a guy who wants to leave for Shangri-La, now or ever. I hate the place myself. I know I'd be bored to death there. There'd be no movie houses. But if seven hundred million people seek Shangri-La via the hushed interior of the local Roxy who am I to oppose them—and with what?

What I am for is bigger and better hokum. Like last year's hat, hokum ages the day after to-morrow—but you can rip off the crown, stick on a bunch of carrots or an eagle, and get something brand new. For instance if the marines get laughable and burlesquey by arriving as marines they can always come as bolsheviks to the rescue of the beleaguered peasant or didn't you see *We from Kronstadt*, which also tossed in a sneering heavy, a Flagg-Quirt set-up, and a beautiful Russian Crawford who planted geraniums in No Man's Land.

As for the Boy-and-Girl thing, this happens to be a sentimental age that wants its movie boys to get their movie girls after the proper amount of quarrelling. Another age may grow anti-sentimental and demand that Boy Loses Girl after a certain amount of loving.

As for myself, I have been guilty of hokum over and over again. In fact, I like it so much I have a collaborator, Graham Baker, to help me double the output. Meanwhile I pray the Lord every night to strengthen my hokum, because I know when it gets rotten eggy I'm through, and that goes for all guys with pens east or west of the Mississippi. I hate to admit it, but in *You Only Live Once*, Graham Baker and I were guilty of the most flagrant hoke. We shot a priest in the belly. The critics raved about it, nobody has asked me why Baker and I didn't see fit to shoot the warden, who would have been the more logical target—so I'm beginning to put it down to high art.

Some day, of course, it will be different. The movie audience will have become a man, demand sterner stuff and ask to be led out of Shangri-La into reality. In the meantime, Old Man Hokum, freshened up with rouge and lipstick, streamlined and chromiumed, just goes rolling along. It's still getting the laughs and tears which audiences have always been suckers for—even as you and I.

Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs

Generations of children have delighted in the stories of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm. These stories, based on traditional folk-tales of the Rhine Province, remain unrivalled as a source of amusement to the young.

From amongst these old familiar friends of fairyland, Walt Disney has chosen a universally acknowledged favourite, *Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs,* for his first full-length feature film.

In the Disney adaptation, which has cost over £200,000 and taken nearly two years to make, the seven dwarfs, unnamed in the original story, emerge with names and characters. Amongst the seven are: Doc, "a nervous little guy," says Disney, "self-styled leader but floundering when decision is needed"; Happy, "a fat cheery fellow, but dumb"; Sleepy, "dozing plenty but saying little, though strangely to the point when he does speak"; and Grumpy, "the real leader, always grousing, but with a heart of gold."

We present the original story assured that it will be an amusing and acceptable introduction to the film.

ONCE, in the middle of winter, when the flakes of snow were falling down like feathers, a queen sat working by a window, which had an ebony frame. While sewing, and looking every moment at the falling snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell on it. She thought the red colour looked so pretty on the white snow, that she exclaimed, "Ah! if I had only a dear little child, as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony." Very soon after this she really had a little daughter, who was as white as snow, for she was fair, as red as blood, for her cheeks were so rosy, and as black as ebony, for her hair and eyes were black, and she was called little Snow-white; but when the child was born the queen died.

After a year the king took another consort. She was a handsome woman, but very proud and ambitious, and could not endure that any one should exceed her in beauty. She had a magical glass in which she regarded herself, and when she stood before it and said—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that may compare with me?"

The glass replied—

"Beautiful queen, you are the loveliest in the land!"

Snow-white, however, grew up more beautiful every day, and when she was seven years old was more lovely than the queen herself. One day, when the latter stood before her glass and asked—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that may compare with me?"

The glass replied—

"You were the handsomest queen of old,
But Snow-white is lovelier, a thousandfold!"

This frightened the queen, and she turned pale with envy, and henceforward, every time she encountered Snow-white she felt her heart turn against her, so that she hated her more and more, for envy and pride grew like weeds in her mind, and she had no peace day or night. At last she could bear it no longer, but calling a huntsman, she said to him, "Take that child into the wood, let me not behold her more; you must kill her, and, as a sign that I am obeyed, bring me her heart and liver." The man did as he was ordered, conveyed the child into the wood, and had drawn his hunting-knife to kill her, when poor Snow-white began to weep, and entreated most pathetically that he would spare her life. "Good huntsman," said she, "grant me my life, I will live henceforth in the wild wood,and never return home." The huntsman's heart was touched, and he said, "Go, poor child," for he thought to himself, the wild beasts will have devoured her ere long, and he felt much relieved that he had resolved not to kill her himself. A young fawn springing by, he killed it, and carried its heart and liver to the queen, who caused it to be salted and then cooked, imagining, while eating it, that it was little Snow-white's liver and heart.

The poor child was now entirely alone in the wood, and soon became so frightened that she was quite bewildered. She ran over sharp stones, and through thorn bushes, and wild animals rushed past her, but they did her no harm. She ran as far as her legs would carry her, and when evening came on she saw a small house, which she entered in order to rest herself.

In this house everything was small, but so pretty and clean that it can hardly be described. There stood a little table, covered with a white cloth, and upon it seven little plates, each plate having its little spoon, fork, and little drinking cup. Against the wall were seven little beds, placed near each other, with snow white curtains. Poor Snow-white was so hungry and thirsty, that she first ate a small portion of bread and vegetable from each plate, and then drank from each cup a sip of wine, because she did not like to empty one plate and one cup altogether, and then was so tired that she laid herself in one of the little beds, but she tried them all before she found one she liked—one was too short, another too long. However, the seventh suited her exactly, and she covered herself up, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

When it was quite dark the masters of the pretty little house came home. They were seven dwarfs, who dug and sought in the mountains for copper. They lighted their seven little candles, and it now being very light in the little house, they discovered that somebody had been there, things not being in the state in which they had left them.

The first said, "Who has been sitting upon my chair?" the second, "Who has been eating out of my plate?" the third, "Who has been eating my bread?" the fourth, "Who has been eating my vegetables?" the fifth, "Who has been drinking out of my cup?" the sixth, "Who has been cutting with my knife?" and the seventh, "Who has been eating with my fork?"

The first now looked around, and saw a little hollow in his bed, so he said, "Who has been lying on my bed?" the others came also to examine, and every one said, "Who has been lying on my bed?" but the seventh discovered little Snow-white in his, for she was lying there asleep. So he called the others, and they all came running with their candles. "Oh!" exclaimed all, "what a beautiful child!" They were delighted at the sight, and would not allow her to be awakened, but let her remain all night where she was. The seventh dwarf was obliged to sleep with his comrades, one hour with each, and so the night passed away.

When it was morning, Snow-white awoke, and was much alarmed upon seeing the seven dwarfs. However, they were very kind, and said, "Child, what is your name?" "My name is Snow-white," answered she. "How came you in our house?" continued the dwarfs. She then related how her stepmother designed to have her killed, but the huntsman had spared her life, and how she had afterwards walked the whole day, until she reached the cottage. The dwarfs said, in reply, "Will you attend to our housekeeping for us? Cook, make beds, wash, sew, and knit? If you like to do all this for us, and keep everything in order for us, you may remain, and shall want for nothing." "With all my heart," replied the child, and stayed accordingly, keeping all in excellent order.

The dwarfs went every morning to the mountains, to find copper and gold, and came home in the evening, when they expected their supper ready. The maiden was all day long alone, so the kind dwarfs warned her, saying, "Beware of the stepmother! she will shortly discover that you are here, so let nobody in."

The queen, after eating as she supposed Snow-white's liver and heart, thought she must now again be the most beautiful, and, advancing to her glass, asked—

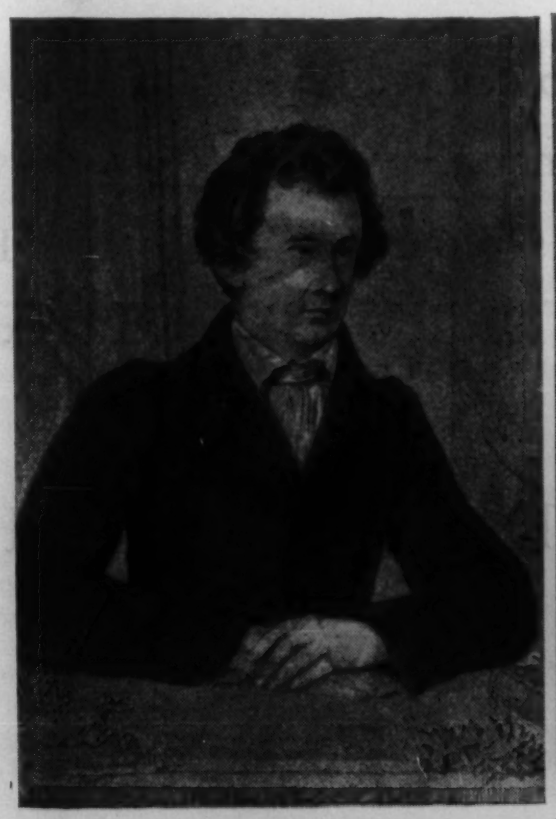
"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that may compare with me?"

The looking-glass replied—

"Oh, queen, your face is fair!
But you cannot compare
With her they call Snow-white; a child
Who lives with the dwarfs, across the mountains wild."

This astonished her, for the glass, she was well aware, did not deceive; so she concluded that the huntsman had deceived her, and that Snow-white still lived. She thought, and thought anew, how she should destroy her, for so long as she was not the loveliest in the land, her envy left her no rest. Having at length decided upon a plan, she coloured her complexion, and dressed herself like an old woman having wares to sell, and was not to be recognised. In this mode she went over the seven mountains to the place where the seven dwarfs dwelt, knocked at the door, and cried, "Beautiful things, cheap!" Snow-white peeped through the window, and said, "Good-day, good woman; what have you to sell?" "Laces, of all kinds and colours," she said, displaying one made of variegated silk. "I may surely let the honest woman enter," thought Snow-white; so she unbolted the door, and bought the beautiful lace for her bodice. "Child," said the woman, "how ill-dressed you look! come, for once, I will lace your bodice as it ought to be done." Snow-white, having no suspicion, stood before her, and allowed her to do it for her; but the pretended old woman laced so quickly and tight, that the child lost her breath, and fell to the ground as if dead. "Are you the fairest now, I wonder?" said the wicked woman, hastening home.

Not long afterwards, it being evening, the seven dwarfs came home; but how were they horrified to see their dear little Snow-white lying on the ground, motionless, and breathless, as if dead. They raised her, and observing that her bodice was too tightly laced, they cut the fatal lace that had caused



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Snow-white and the Seven Dwarfs

(*Continued from page* 9).

the mischief, upon which she began to breathe, and at length gradually revived. When the dwarfs heard what had taken place, they said, "The old woman was no other than the wicked queen; take care of yourself, and let nobody enter, when we are not at home." But the bad woman, in the meantime, had returned to the palace, and approaching the looking-glass, addressed to it the favourite inquiry—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that may compare with me?"

To which, as before, the glass replied to the queen—

"Ah, queen, your face is fair!
But you cannot compare
With her they call Snow-white; a child
Who dwells with the dwarfs, across the mountains wild."

When she heard these words, her blood ran cold, for she thought she had effectually disposed of the child. "It must be done, however," she said; "and this time I will spare no pains." Accordingly she, by magic art, prepared a comb of the most destructive quality, and disguising herself, took the form of another old woman. She crossed the seven hills, and coming to the house, knocked at the door, crying, "Buy my pretty wares, cheap!" Snow-white looked out, and said, "Go on; I may not let anybody in." "You may, however, look," said the woman, holding up the poisoned comb for her inspection, which pleased the child so well, that she allowed herself to be persuaded, and the door was opened.

When the purchase was made, the old woman said, "Let me comb your hair nicely for you"; and poor Snow-white, thinking no harm, permitted her to do so: but scarcely had the comb touched the hair, than the poison took effect, and the maiden fell senseless to the ground. "You miracle of beauty!" said the wicked woman, scornfully, "your reign is over," and hastened away.

Fortunately, evening was at hand, and the seven dwarfs were soon at home: directly they saw Snow-white lying on the ground, their suspicions fell upon the stepmother; they examined her carefully, and discovering the poisoned comb, drew it from her hair. Scarcely had they done so, than the maiden revived, and related all that had happened to her. Again they warned her against her stepmother, and showed her the consequence of neglecting to follow their advice, which she promised to observe for the future.

Directly the queen reached home, she hastened to reap, as she thought, the fruit of her success; and addressing the glass, said—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that can compare with me?"

The reply was the same as before—

"Oh, queen, your face is fair?
But you cannot compare
With her they call Snow-white; a child
Who lives with the dwarfs, across the mountains wild."

Her rage at receiving this answer passed all bounds. "If it costs me my own life, Snow-white shall die," said she, at length. Then shutting herself up in a secret chamber, she composed of all kinds of poisonous charms, an apple, fair to look at, but death to swallow. It was so beautiful, that every one who saw it, must desire to eat; but the first morsel would prove fatal. When this was done, she took the habit of a peasant, and crossing the seven hills, came to the dwarfs' house. She knocked, and Snow-white put her head out of the window, saying, "I may not admit anybody, the seven dwarfs have forbidden me." "Very well," returned the woman; "I shall soon get rid of my apples somewhere else. There, I will give one to you." "Thank you," said Snow-white; "I may not take it." "Are you afraid of poison?" said the peasant; "see, I will cut the apple in half, and give you the rosy part; the other I will eat myself." The apple was so artfully made, that the red alone was poisonous; and Snow-white was so caught by its beautiful appearance, that seeing the peasant eat a portion, she thought there could be no harm in it, stretched forth her hand, and took it from the woman.

The instant, however, that a morsel reached her mouth, she fell dead to the ground. The queen stood for a moment contemplating the success of her stratagem; then saying, "White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony! this time the dwarfs can do nothing for you," she departed. Her first act was to go to the glass, and she said—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that may compare with me?"

The answer was—

"Oh, queen, you are the loveliest in the land!"

Now, for the first time her wicked heart felt peace, that is to say, as much as such a wicked heart could.

The little dwarfs returned home the same evening, and found Snow-white lying on the ground, incapable of breathing, and dead. They raised her, tried all possible means to discover the cause of her death, combed her hair, unlaced her bodice, washed her with wine and water, in short, although satisfied that in some way the stepmother was the cause of the disaster, they could not discover how, and the dear child was dead, and remained so. They laid her upon a bier, and all seven sat around, bewailing her for three days. They then thought of burying her, but she looked so fresh and like a living creature, and her cheeks were so red, that they said, "We cannot commit her to the earth." So they had a transparent coffin made of glass, placed her within, and caused her name to be written outside, and that she was a king's daughter. The coffin was kept upon the mountain, and one of the dwarfs was always by, to watch it. The animals also came to lament for Snow-white; first an owl, then a raven, and afterwards a pigeon.

Snow-white had now lain for some considerable time in the coffin on the mountain, yet she only looked as if she were sleeping, for she was still as white as snow, as red as blood and as black as ebony.

It happened that a king's son lost his way in the wood, and came to the dwarfs' house to pass the night; he had seen the coffin on the mountain, with lovely Snow-white lying in it, and had read the golden letters thereon. He therefore said to the dwarfs, "Let me have the coffin; I will give you whatever you like to ask for it." The dwarfs, however, replied that they would not part with it for all the gold in the world. "Give it to me, then," said the prince, "for I cannot live without seeing Snow-white; I will value and honour her above all I hold dear."

When he spoke thus, the good little dwarfs felt pity for him, and gave him the coffin; and the prince ordered his servants immediately to raise it on their shoulders, and bear it away. In doing this, it happened that they stumbled over a branch lying on the ground, and the jerk caused the poisonous morsels of apple, which Snow-white had taken into her mouth, to return from her throat, for they had not been swallowed.

Not long after, she opened her eyes, raised the lid of the coffin, sat up, and was much surprised when she found herself moving on some men's shoulders. "Where am I?" she exclaimed. "With me!" said the prince; and he began to relate to her all that had happened, adding, "I love you more than anything else in the world; come to my father's palace, and you shall be my bride." Snow-white consented, accompanied him thither, and the marriage took place with much pomp.

Snow-white's wicked stepmother was, however, invited to the wedding, and having put on the splendid robe she had had made for the occasion, she stood before the glass, and said—

"Mirror, tell me, can you see
Any that can compare with me?"

The glass replied immediately—

"Till now you were the fairest queen,
But now a lovelier may be seen!"

The wicked queen uttered a terrible imprecation against her rival, and was much disturbed at the intelligence conveyed by her faithful glass. At first, she determined not to go to the marriage; but she had no rest, and felt compelled to go in order to see the young queen.

Upon entering, she saw Snow-white, and fear and astonishment deprived her of the power of stirring from the spot, for she was the last person she expected to see. In the meantime her punishment had been prepared; iron slippers were made red-hot in a furnace, and when ready were taken out with tongs and placed before the queen. She was then compelled to put her feet into them, and dance until she fell dead, and all present felt so much detestation of her wickedness, that there were none to pity her.

YOU CAN'T KID THE CAMERA

says Robert Donat. A further extract from Donat's excellent article in 'Footnotes to the Film'

OF this I am quite certain. I am a better actor for my film experience. Two qualities —concentration and sincerity—are even more necessary on the screen than on the stage, and one's work cannot fail to be the richer for their exercise. An American guest—of whom we should be so proud that nothing should ever be permitted to tempt her out of England—recently appeared in the West End of London in a play somewhat miscalled a melodrama. I refer to Miss Constance Cummings. Originally a stage actress, she gained a certain screen reputation and is married to a famous English playwright. It is one of the hopes of our Theatre that Benn Levy will keep her supplied with plays worthy of her rare and exciting abilities. In *Young Madame Conti* Miss Cummings gave a performance made immeasurably superior by her camera experience; so much so, that no young stage actress devoid of film experience could hope to touch it.

Your stage producer rarely directs from the front row of the stalls: once the play reaches the stage and the curtain is up, you will find him either at the back of the stalls or in the dress circle. The farther rehearsals proceed, the farther away from his actors he tends to get. Filming employs almost the reverse methods. A scene is shot first in long-shot—then medium, then close-up. The film director tends to approach, the stage director to retreat from, the actors. But that is not the only difference. Having been manoeuvred practically under the skin of the actors, the camera takes the scene in miniature and later enlarges that miniature. (In this process certain changes occur, but they are not of great importance. For instance, the play of light, cunningly screened and filtered, may transform a made-up face so that film actors' mothers have been known to pay twice before recognising their own progeny. Since we are pursuing comparisons, the theatre has its illusions too, and many of them are shattered at the stage door.)

In the theatre it is the audience which receives; in the studio it is the camera, with this surprising difference—that whereas one can get away with flippancy, sloppiness and insincerity in the theatre, infinite care must be exercised in front of the camera. In the theatre the broad methods necessary to reach topmost galleryite and lowermost pittite sometimes cover a multitude of sins.

Much has been said about the theatre's living response in its audience, but little truth has been spoken. There is nothing to equal the electric give-and-take of a full house, but it is false to describe an audience's reaction as "subtle." All mass reaction is collective; its emotions are simple, sometimes crude and often based on hysteria. It is an undeniable stimulus but no more potent than the creative stimulus of actual endeavour. I am certain that my best work has been given either in my own study or at rehearsals where there was no audience at all. The camera, if uncompromisingly critical, is at least unemotional and does not flatter.

With the searching eye of the camera so close upon one, how can one dare to be other than truthful? To say that the average film demands the minimum of veracity is simply a criticism of the average film and no indictment of film acting in itself. Because we are accustomed to seeing displays of pygmy emotion and magazine-story intellect, must we assume that cinematic art has nothing more to offer? Literature is not judged by the penny dreadful.

It is one of the paradoxes of the Cinema that while it is supposed to succeed principally with mass effects it is actually at its best when it handles the little things, the seemingly unimportant. On the screen an apparent triviality can achieve as much pure drama as many a big effect which thrilled its way across the Lyceum footlights in its most theatrical days. Remember our limitations, dear reader. A flicker of doubt in the eyes on the stage is meaningless except to the first few rows of stalls. Contemptuous critics label the filmic process as "simply the real thing photographed." What a compliment—if a veiled one. Let us examine this reality for a moment, and if we bear in mind that technique is needed every bit as much for the overcoming of difficulties as for the actual exercise of the art itself, it may be amusing to recite a few of them.

On the screen, suppose we see a modern young man dangling a leg over a modern office desk with modern New York receding in the background. Suddenly we come closer to him. In other words, the camera moves into close-up. His eyes flash a look of doubt, and that is all. I have purposely chosen something elementary. That flicker of doubt is created in a blaze of light in a dreadful fug under the very nose of that terrifying taskmaster, the camera lens, with a "mike" on a boom hovering overhead, surrounded by the gang of electricians and props boys and faced by the unit staff headed by the director—who is expecting results. Behind him are the plaster walls and an unglazed window with an enlarged black-and-white picture-postcard of New York propped up behind it; above him and everywhere else, lights.

In actual fact, the young man's behind is probably propped up on a couple of cushions or books and the desk raised up on wood blocks to improve matters for the camera, so that his leg dangles at a very unnatural height from the ground, and he must gauge

his movements so that at the moment of the close-up, his head will be momentarily still and his eyes—almost imperceptible—will flash their story; not into the lens itself (for the lens, though our most inquisitive neighbour, must be ignored completely if we would win it over completely), not precisely into the lens, then, but at a spot dangerously close. And an exact spot; remember, he is to convey a flicker of doubt—not a flicker of doubt as to where he should look, and so insidiously faithful is the lens that it will blurt out the whole story if given half a chance: "Damn! I'm looking into the lens." "Hell! I looked too low!"

But it is when one sits in the projection theatre at the studio the following day and sees one's previous day's efforts come to life, that the real strength of a mere moment becomes properly significant. Then, when one senses the value of detail and the unique opportunities afforded for perfection, the ultimate possibilities of film-making seem to gain a sort of sanctity. One leaves the stuffy little theatre mellowed and humbled but determined to aim high.

IMAGINE that I find myself faced with the problem of playing on the screen a part I have already played on the stage. Ideally, this could never exist—a stage play belonging emphatically to the theatre. Here we have the slavish imitations of the film world, the wholesale pinching of ideas. "Dearth of Stories" is simply an admission of the lack of creative talent in film studios, talent which, if worthy of its own medium, should conceive, plan and produce exclusively in filmic terms. The so-called "adaptation," which, at its best done lovingly with a respect for the original, sends one back longingly to the bookshelf, and at its worst makes one ask whatever gods there be why a good story known and beloved by thousands should be twisted, distorted and disembowelled. Like a recent case I have only too much cause to remember, in which the prologue, epilogue and main theme of a novel were ruthlessly dismembered to make a glamorous holiday; this in itself was lamentable and stupid enough, but the author's slavish submission to such atrocities, and his praise, spoken in my presence, of the butchery, are quite unforgivable. Really, something must be done to protect authors from themselves.

For the sake of investigating the comparison, I will attempt it: James Bridie at last consents to the filming of *A Sleeping Clergyman*. Let me pause to warn you that if ever this does happen it will be neither "freely adapted from" nor "based on" the original; it will follow Bridie's scheme or perish in the attempt. The moment I will choose is the great one in the First Act where the pregnant sweetheart of Cameron the First deliberately smashes his culture tubes. For those so unfortunate as to miss this superb drama, I will explain that Cameron the First anticipated Pasteur's germ theory of disease, and these culture tubes meant so much to him that rather than be separated from them or in any way be hindered in his work he turned a deaf ear to the friends who offered him comparative luxury, sea air and the ravishing proximity of his mistress, and stuck to his combined discomforts in a Glasgow attic. Cameron, who is already half out of bed, seething with fury at the girl's taunts, cries out as she backs away from him into a collision with the table on which his experimental culture tubes repose in their rack. Seeing the mingled horror and love in his eyes—the love which she is denied—she deliberately turns and sweeps them to the floor.

NOW so far I have played the purist, rendering unto the Cinema the things which are the Cinema's—and denying any co-operative truck with the Theatre. But I must confess it is a very fascinating comparison, because I have just discovered that the idea which dominated the scene in the reading, but did not dominate in the Theatre, could easily dominate on the screen—the decision being in the scenarist's hands. Which do you wish to predominate, Mr. Bridie? The germ theory symbolised by the culture tubes, Cameron's inherent badness, or Cameron's inherent genius? (I haven't forgotten the girl, who, good as her chances are, really carried the baby in more senses than one.) In the reading, the germ theory won the day; in the theatre, Cameron's desperate race against death and his desperate ill-treatment of the girl.

Bridie, who knows the taste and smell of his theatrical onions about as well as anyone writing in the Theatre to-day, realising that his little rack of test tubes would be an almost negligible part of the stage setting, built up an edifice of words. Many of these, Mr. Bridie, will have to go from our scenario because they will be superfluous. Alternatively, Mr. Donat, you will have to sacrifice some of your high-lights too, because those test tubes are going to be given a good deal of footage. Close-up after close-up will plant and re-plant them. Finally, a huge one, as the girl smashes them to the floor, then one of the table, and the awful emptiness where they had been. These things will intensify the drama culminating in Cameron's tragic eagerness to outlive his dream, his bitter hatred of the things that thwart him, his awful agony when he sees his dream destroyed, and his final uncontrollable suicidal rage; intensify it even more than Bridie's theatrical devices built them up for me on the stage. But the camera will now demand the greatest responsibility ever asked of an artist—absolute honesty and integrity. When that relentless eye goggles at us in close-up we may be sure of one thing—we must deliver up to it the finest work of which we are capable; nothing but the truth will do.

AND is not that the sum total of any claim we may make for the films? For what does it amount to when all is said and done? Just this: an instrument as subtle, as plastic, as creative and inspired as the technicians we put behind it and actors we put in front of it. No more; no less.

For the future, it is for the writer, the producer, the director, the technician and the actor to dare to have a conscience, and for the public to discover its own intelligence.

Somewhere above I have hinted that the film actor's most important asset is the eye. Didn't somebody once say that the eye is the window of the soul?

"Surrounded by technicians and extras"—*Knight Without Armour*, in production

"BLAST THE NAVY!

Stick to the Shop, Boys, Stick to the SHOP!"

It is not improbable that, more than any other corporation of men, the Royal Navy has suffered at the hands of the cinema. For much longer than one cares to remember have its officers and men and their ships been made silly to serve the almighty Box-Office. There has been a surfeit of comic admirals with seductively unseduceable daughters, of Henty-ish officers and low comedy men. Fortunately the ships themselves have retained much of their dignity; even the very smartest men about Wardour Street are up against something in the case of thirty or forty thousand tons of steel. Though they may rust, ferrous metals are not easily made febrile.

But in *Our Island Nation*—an E.G.S. production in six reels—the Navy does not suffer in this old fashioned way. Up to a point the film is valid and magnificent, and *never*, I consider, have there hitherto been assembled such thousands of feet of good downright documentary film of ships' companies at work and of august photography of their ships at sea. Because of "the close and continuous co-operation of the Admiralty in the production of this film"—to quote E.G.S.—"the unit of ten cameramen worked in ships, aircraft and aircraft carriers of the Home and Mediterranean Fleets during the combined manœuvres in the Atlantic last March, and at Gibraltar and Malta and in the Mediterranean during January, February and March." Greater facilities indeed could hardly have been afforded.

There are sequences of admirable shots illustrating aspects of the routine on board a battleship on an ordinary day in harbour—the keeping of the ship and her armament clean; the training of young seamen; the work of boats' crews; minor refitting work on machinery; the Royal Marines at small arm drill, and all the rest of it; also recreational activities on board and ashore after working hours.

All this is informative and in every way good in the documentary tradition. But of course it is when the ships are at sea that we get the high lights. Ships gliding out of the Grand Harbour at Malta at dawn, with the mists smoking about the looming fortress walls; battleships wallowing and plunging in a seaway—shot after shot superbly taken; the nine great 16-inch guns of *Nelson* or *Rodney*, all within the frame, firing their salvoes and, between them, for re-loading, swinging like chorus girls' legs; the javelin-like destroyers weaving their lovely patterns against turbulent sea and sky; an aircraft attack on the fleet and the impression of the terrific repelling force of the multiple pom-poms; and a *tremendous* shot—taken broadside on—of a *Queen Elizabeth* class battleship shoving her bows into a big head sea as if she were pretending to be a submarine. If God ever answers cameramen's prayers then on that occasion he very certainly handed it to Raymond Elton on a salver. And, indeed, throughout the naval shots of the film, one takes one's hat off to those cameramen. What they must have had to put up with, one way and another, is just no armchair critic's business.

Admitting that the film in effect is propaganda for the Navy, the angle of presentation of the main theme—that the job of the Fleet, the work of all these officers and men in their steel ships, is to ensure their country's food supply—is impeccable. Democratically it is pleasing that the hero—the human symbol of their devotion to duty—is not an officer but a rating; a chief yeoman of signals. Yes, up to a point—a high point—the film is valid and, in parts, magnificent.

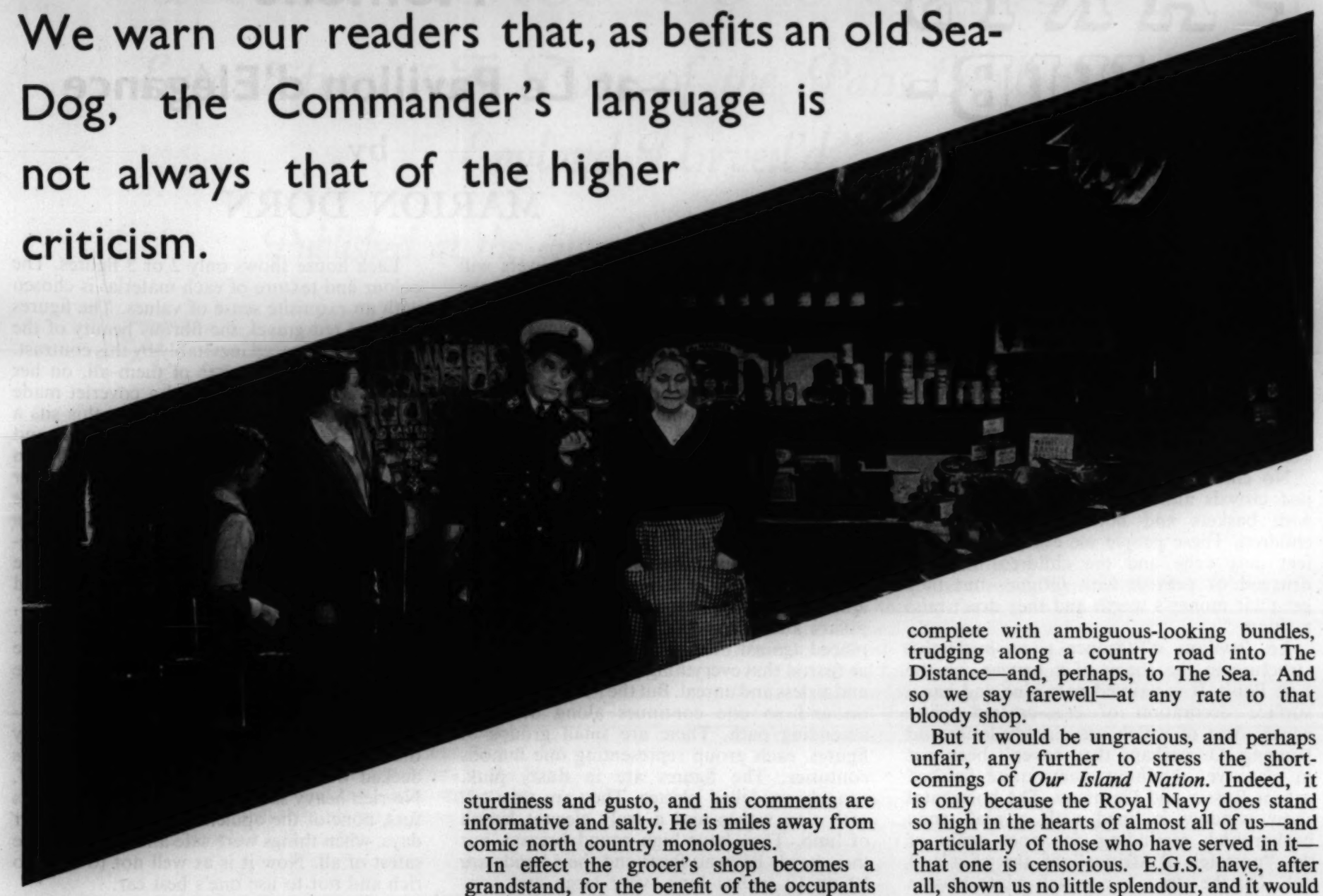
But what?

There is our old college chum—that fetish for fiction at any cost. We are unconcerned here with whose fault that may be—we merely take note of it as a plain symptomatic fact. The Great Big Box-Office Bogey Who Lives In A Great Big Wood In Wardour Street must be propitiated. So even the august majesty of the Fleet must toe the line. Thus, superimposed upon its tremendous sea-strewn activities, upon that valid documentary and that august beauty of great ships at sea, is this Story.

The hero, the chief yeoman of signals,

"Our Island Nation" the new E.G.S. production reviewed by Commander Campbell Lithgow, R.N. (Ret'd.).

We warn our readers that, as befits an old Sea-Dog, the Commander's language is not always that of the higher criticism.



whose ship is due to sail in forty-eight hours, receives a telegram from his sister saying that her husband is "critical." He is granted special leave for twenty-four hours and goes to her—to find that her husband, a crippled grocer, is in a cantankerous mood. Customers come into his shop and complain that his prices are too high, and he puts the blame not on economic causes but on the Navy which costs the taxpayer so much. So, very obligingly, the chief yeoman dedicates his special leave to justifying the Fleet to the grocer explaining to him that it ensures his supply of commodities. Also the grocer has two sons, who have ideas about "going to sea," which the grocer thinks is a Bad Thing, but which the chief yeoman thinks is a Good Thing.

The part of the hero is played by Stanley Holloway, but do not therefore be dismayed. Young Albert is not cast as a midshipman, nor Laurel and Hardy as rival Commanders-in-Chief—nor the Marx Brothers as their Lordships. The producers know where to draw the line. And Stanley Holloway is good: he looks the part and plays it with sturdiness and gusto, and his comments are informative and salty. He is miles away from comic north country monologues.

In effect the grocer's shop becomes a grandstand, for the benefit of the occupants of which the rival fleets do their stuff, with the chief yeoman as commentator. A Red (British) fleet, based at Gibraltar, saves a food convoy from a marauding Blue (Enemy) fleet working from Malta: a set piece for the benefit of the grocer.

There is also an abortive attempt to supplement Stanley Holloway's commentary by the introduction of a naval officer and model ships in the presence of an enquiring civilian, but abortion is so prompt that gestation can hardly be said to have taken place at all. But there is no sort of abortion of the shop. Oh, dear no. The producers are very fond mothers of that. Indeed, throughout the film—breaking down its continuity, validity and beauty—we are continually being dragged back there. It is virtually as if the director were continually bawling through a megaphone, "Blast the navy—stick to the shop, boys, stick to the shop!" This fixation is remarkable. The fleets may be knocking seven varieties of highly coloured hell out of one another, but they have to put them all on the ice when a hick comes in to ask the price of a pound of cheese. And the film ends—by Fitzpatrick out of Chaplin—with the grocer's two boys, complete with ambiguous-looking bundles, trudging along a country road into The Distance—and, perhaps, to The Sea. And so we say farewell—at any rate to that bloody shop.

But it would be ungracious, and perhaps unfair, any further to stress the shortcomings of *Our Island Nation*. Indeed, it is only because the Royal Navy does stand so high in the hearts of almost all of us—and particularly of those who have served in it—that one is censorious. E.G.S. have, after all, shown us no little splendour, and it would be churlish not to be very grateful for it. Their enterprise and their resource in the face of many difficulties are most certainly to be commended. Ancient history it is for a ship to be spoiled for a hap'orth of tar; contemporary history for a man-of-war and her people to be be-sugared for the making of musical comedy fudge; and though, perhaps, it is a somewhat formidable innovation for the majesty of The Fleet thus to be subverted for a puppet show for one cantankerous grocer, The Fleet is The Fleet for all that.

After all, too, our island nation is a nation of shopkeepers, and so The Fleet but a shopkeepers' fleet, and though to some ways of thinking, it might have been in better taste not quite so crudely to have stressed the fact, it is unquestionable that presentation of such Facts of Life is fashionable—and, to some extent, popular—and so the faults of the film are due, presumably, not so much to E.G.S., but to that Big Bad Bogey. And, *Beautifully*, does this film serve to reveal just what a cretin *He* really is. Hundreds of thousands of tons of exquisitely wrought steel here condescend to prove it to you.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION

The Mode of the Moment

—at Le Pavillon d'Elégance

by

MARION DORN

On Sundays, the Paris Exhibition has the feeling of the Midi en fête. One is sucked through the Trocadero Gate with a great crowd as through a funnel, on to the wide terrace, and as you pause to catch your breath, you have a vision of fountains, trees, great tomb-like structures and many large, glass-walled lavatories and laundries and hat-boxes, and of a great, good-natured excited crowd.

No chic Parisians, no neat Americans—just crowds and crowds of country people with baskets and bottles and all of the children. These people see everything. Their feet may ache and the children may get drugged or peevish with fatigue—but they get their money's worth and they don't miss a thing.

Le Pavillon d'Elégance is an ineffective structure in the shape of a hangar, on the Left Bank. It is painted pale blue and has a surface decoration of criss-crossed white ropes some of which are already loose and hanging. Or perhaps they haven't been put in place yet. Nothing seems quite finished except Russia and Germany. The horizontal show window is lined with a real straw background, reminding one once again of the "nostalgie d'Afrique" of the chic and rich. On the straw is a rough white plaster bow, its ribbons clumsily undulating over the whole length and inscribed with the names of all the great couturiers of France. The window is only about 3 feet deep and is filled with coarse dirt and stones. One rather imagines that exotic plants and flowers will eventually fill this space, because in one corner is a carefully arranged group consisting of an old garden rake on which hangs a worn coat—and a shapeless but very human and worn pair of shoes stand below it with a neatly folded piece of brown paper, the string carefully wound around and saved.

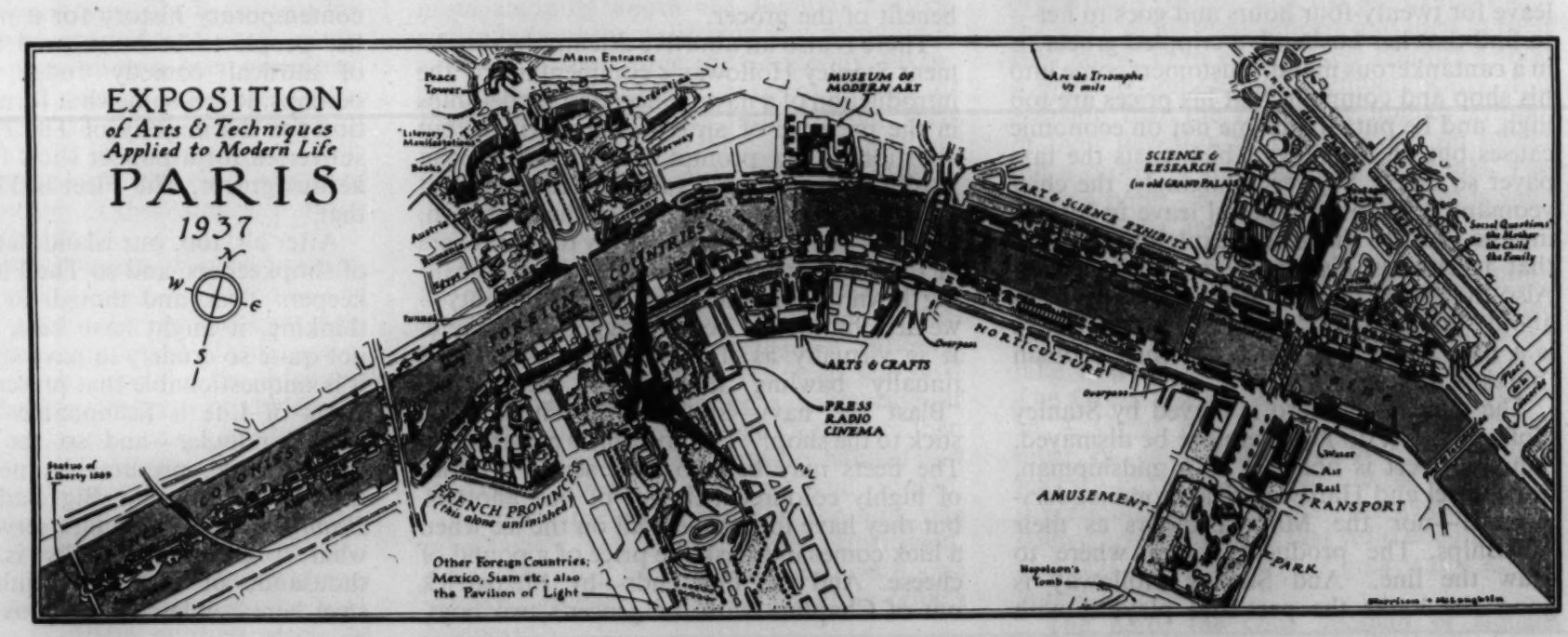
On the upper side of the building by the entrance, is a raised flower bed neatly filled with red gravel. Out of this rises a pink head, about 10 feet high, featureless and faceless, and curving around it one lone palm tree, its feathery top green and waving and alive.

Then one joins the crowd pushing into the pavilion. The air is stifling and unventilated and in the dim light one sees twisted Baroque pillars and heavy plaster palms ingeniously placed against the concave walls. The feeling at first is that everything is dusty pink and hot and airless and unreal. But the Midi is plodding on and so one continues along a slowly ascending path. There are small groups of figures, each group representing one famous couturier. The figures are in dusty pink, roughly modelled plaster. They are very tall with tiny waists and a truly elegant length of limb. They have high round breasts, but their heads have no faces and their hands are 10 or 12 inches long, very large and very rough with sausage fingers. They stand with the lissome and unreal grace of the fashion drawing. On them the miracles of French weaving are draped with a sensitive awareness of Greece and India.

Each house shows only 2 or 3 figures. The colour and texture of each material is chosen with an exquisite sense of values. The figures stand in red gravel, the fibrous beauty of the materials enhanced inevitably by this contrast. The greatest dressmaker of them all, on her bit of red gravel, has tossed a coverlet made entirely of artificial flowers and on this sits a plaster "Elégante" under one spotlight and she is nude with a butterfly for company. In the corner, in semi-light, is a dress tossed over an unbelievable plaster chair and on the gravel a pair of sandals and a large hat. One only dares to guess what her awesome elegance will be when she rises from that false bed of flowers from under that false sun and dons her wisp of miraculously fashioned stuff, girdling her 10-inch waist with some rough, strange leather which a sailor might have dropped as he chased his girl through the back streets of Toulon.

One feels the genius of the French for this—the adornment of the elegant ones in exactly the mode of the moment. The whole thing is decked out in perverse contempt for itself. No rich heavy satins and laces, no ponderous furs, none of the opulent showiness of earlier days, when things were safe and the rich were safest of all. Now it is as well not to look so rich and not to use one's best car.

And a new kind of elegance, based on understatement and on a nonchalant throwing away of all appearance of the cares and furbelows of wealth has risen like a frail abnormal flower.



Map by Courtesy of "Time"

THE PLEASURES OF MODESTY

Extract from "A Tour of the Paris Exhibition; or England Unveil'd."

Published at the Sign of the Tailor's Goose, 1937.

ANON, behind great Hitler's lofty Tomb,
And Stalin's Hopefuls, striding to their doom
Over a marble precipice; below
That relic of a Nineteenth Century Show,
The venerable tower of Monsieur Eiffel,
There lurks an inconsiderable trifle,
More like a parcel from a London Store
All wrapped for Christmas,—only this is more
Discreetly dight, as well befits the taste
Of British enterprise when baldly faced
With self-advertisement—there lurks in fact
That model of all diplomatic tact,
Shrunk like a spinster from the public gaze
Demure and smug—Le Pavillon Anglais!

Stranger, beware! You may expect to find
(Such misconceptions crowd your foreign mind)
The crowning Glory of our Iron and Steel,
The farmer's Heritage, the turning Wheel
That marks the Pit from which our Riches rise,
The Empire's spread, achievements in the Skies,
Upon the Ocean and the Earth—and more
Important still than all that's gone before,
Our People's Life to-day.

Stranger, come in,
Prepare Nirvana's final gift to win—
Behold a Peeress, who, you may determine
Is wax—but wears her Coronation Ermine.
Look up! And there, symbolically displayed
In photographic Splendour, and arrayed
As well as any Britisher could wish
In cap and waders, Chamberlain catching Fish.
Near him, to curb such hints of politics,
Admire this showcase, full of hockey sticks;
See guns and darts and archery—and all
The many Games for which you use a Ball.
But, lest at last this inspiration pall
To Clothing turn—for are we not in Paris,
That town of chic, of brogues and tweeds from Harris?

Admire the garbs so grimly sewn for sport,
For Hunting, Shooting, and—a happy thought—
This charming Kilt, with hairy Sporran paired,
Fit covering for any Sassenach Laird.
Rove with your eyes, and check th' insulting wince
Before cascades of Satin, Muslin, Chintz.
Examine carefully—there's nothing finer
Within this Hall—those serried rows of China,
Nor must you miss the photographic Mural
Proving that Angleterre is dumb—if rural.
You ask, where are the achievements of the Nation?
Surely beyond this strange conglomeration
There lies a broader, more exciting Space
Wherein there shines the Glory of our Race?

Search diligently. On a Shelf remote
You may observe the latest Flying Boat
(A modelled Midget), and a small "Queen Mary"
Vying for note—the glass case none too airy—
With a streamlined—but not the latest type
(For we prefer our Harvests over-ripe)—
—A streamlined Locomotive. If you find them
Do not expect to learn, say, who designed them,
But read instead the magic words—so much
More in our character—"Please do not touch."

Regally blue, the lofty Ceiling soars
And as you gaze, you may in wonder pause,
For, also blue, and merging with the Plaster
There hangs—well nigh invisible—a faster
Flying Machine than any that can rape
Records between Old England and the Cape;
As large as life, but cunningly concealed,
It hangs remote and vague.
For those who wield
The Scythe, the Axe, and other Farming Tools
The Basement calls. The Stranger's Ardour cools,
For here no Tractors rear their hideous Fronts,
No modern Touch the old Regime affronts—
Instead—among a mass of Children's Toys—
A wooden Plough—the sort no one employs,
Reposes here in placid self-sufficiency
A work of Art, opposing all Efficiency. . . .

'Tis over. In the sunny Park once more
The Stranger strides towards another Door
Unwitting. Ere a warning one can utter, he
Is trapped again in the Olde Englyshe Buttery,
Where all sedately he can sit and sip a
Nice cup of Tea—and, sent by air, a Kipper
Fragrant and tender, will at last remind him
He's not left *all* Reality behind him.

FLORA and FAUNA of the BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

"Our British Cinema, at the outset of its second decade of life, will be dependent for its prestige upon a large number of Foreign gentlemen," reports the FILM COUNCIL

THE Government's proposals for the revised Quota Act have created a sharp division of opinion both within the film industry itself and in the wider fields of public discussion. On one side are lined up those who conceive of British production as a magnetic field for attracting international capital and international personnel towards the making of films for the world market. Against this view the opinion is held that the original intention of the Quota Act was not only to make a British film industry economically possible, but also to ensure that such an industry, under the creative control of British people, should bring to the screen something of the life, tradition and culture of Britain and its Empire. Those who believe in this deeper purpose of the Act see in the White Paper proposals a preoccupation with money as a standard of judgment. They maintain that a revision of the Act on this basis will do little to encourage, and may directly hinder, the building up of a truly British film industry.

Under these circumstances it has seemed to us important to make some study of the creative personnel at present controlling the output of the British studios in order to see how far ten years of Quota working have contributed to the formation of an industry British in ideology* and outlook.

For the purpose of this survey we may consider British production under two heads: first, those British companies which were stimulated into existence as a direct or indirect result of the Act; second, the subsidiaries of the great American firms producing or about to start production in this country in fulfilment of their Quota obligations.

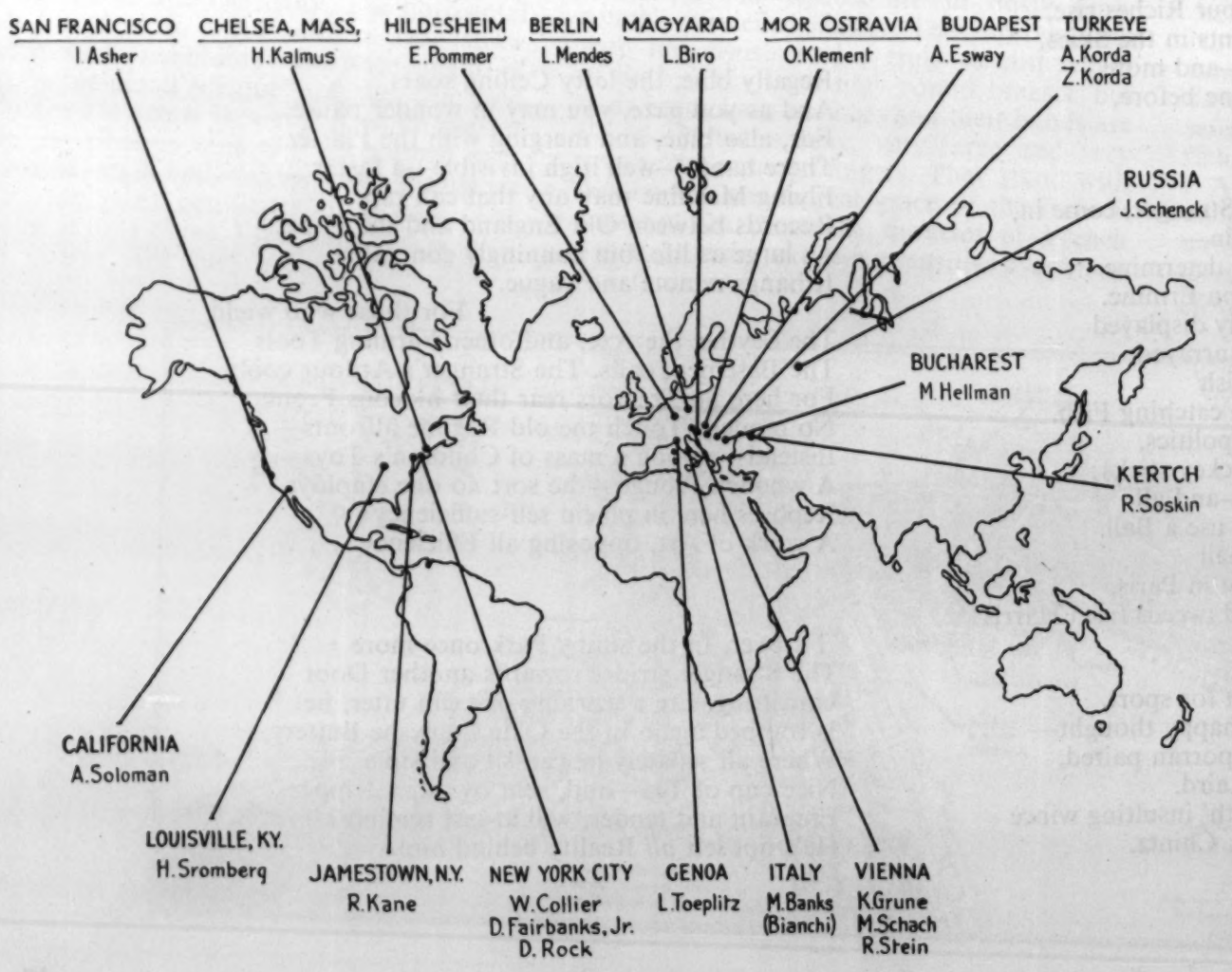
Let us first consider the case of the multitude of British companies which, seven months ago, were plunged into the depths o financial crisis. The field has emerged somewhat bedraggled for its experience, but its structure is still tolerably recognisable. In association with United Artsts we may still notice London Films, Atlantic, Criterion, Pall Mall, etc. Distributing through G.F.D. are Capitol, Trafalgar, Buckingham and Gainsborough, while in affiliation with the G.F.D. producing organisation at Pinewood are the remnants of G.-B. B.I.P. maintains its output for the cinemas of A.B.C., and working through their own renters are A.T.P., British Lion and other units.

Who, then, are the creative men behind these organisations, upon whose knowledge and interpretation of the British scene the prestige of the English cinema must stand or fall?

At the head of London Films is **Mr. Alexander Korda,** born at Turkeye, Hungary, in 1893. Mr. Korda entered the American film business in 1915, directing some 14 films for First National, Fox and other companies in America before coming to England for Paramount British in 1931. Closely associated with Mr. Korda at L.F.P. is **Mr. Zoltan Korda,** born at Turkeye, Hungary, in 1895. Mr. Z. Korda directed films in Berlin and Vienna, and also wrote for Fox before coming to England to assist his brother by directing *Sanders of the River* and co-directing *Elephant Boy*. Chief of the scenario department of London Films, and therefore in a position of authority with regard to British authors and their works, is **Mr. Lajos Biro,** born at Magyarad, Hungary, in 1883, who was appointed to the board of L.F.P. in 1932 after a continental career as scenarist and story-writer.

In the prominent creative post of producer to Atlantic Films is **Mr. Alexander Esway,** who was born at Budapest, Hungary. Mr. Esway entered the film business in 1922 in Berlin. He directed and wrote for UFA and D.I.S. (Berlin) before his arrival in England to associate himself with Gainsborough, B.I.P. and later with Columbia.

Leading the British production staff of Criterion Films we find **Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, Jnr.,** born in New York City in 1907,



*'It is not true that we English have no "ideology"; we have one, and it is the hope of the world.'—Lord Eustace Percy in the *Sunday Times*, Aug. 15th, 1937.

who acted in more than 30 American films for M.G.M., Universal, Warner, First National, Columbia and Tiffany before placing his experience at the disposal of the British screen; and **Mr. Marcel Hellman,** who was born at Bucharest, Rumania, in 1898.

Director to Pall Mall is **Mr. Lothar Mendes,** born in Berlin in 1894, whose training was conducted on the theatrical stages of Berlin and Vienna, and whose experiences as a film director were largely gained under the foreign auspices of UFA, First National, Paramount and M.G.M.

At Inter-Allied Film Producers, a new United Artists affiliation, British production is in the hands of **Messrs. Joe Schenck** and **Paul Czinner.** After his birth in Russia on Christmas Day, 1882, Mr. Schenck went to America where he entered the film industry via the amusement-park business. After a long independent career in the U.S.A. he became chairman of 20th Century-Fox, president of 20th Century Pictures, president of United Artists and president of Metropolitan Playhouses Inc. In Dr. Czinner Inter-Allied have an able director of Austrian origin who has directed his wife (also of Austrian origin) in several outstanding British parts.

Interpreting the spirit of England for the G.F.D. units of Trafalgar, Buckingham and Capitol are three eminent natives of Austria: **Herren Max Schach, Karl Grune** and **Paul Stein,** all of whom were born in Vienna in 1890, 1892 and 1893 respectively. All, also, worked for UFA at different times. Herr Grune was associated with the Deutsches Theatre of Berlin before joining Emelka and Pathe-Natan, while Herr Stein was a stage actor in Berlin and Vienna, emigrating afterwards to America to direct for Warner, Cecil DeMille and Universal. Herr Schach graduated to the scenario department of UFA from a leading Berlin newspaper.

At Elstree the production unit of A.B.C. under the control of John Maxwell (born Glasgow, Scotland), is, we understand, soon to have a new addition to its forces in **Erich Pommer,** the celebrated continental producer who was born at Hildesheim, Germany, in 1899. Herr Pommer came to this country in 1936 to take up positions with Pendennis and Mayfair after a long career devoted to the development of the German cinema.

Nor should we forget those other and more independent company promoters, producers and technicians from across the seas who are familiar contributors to the prestige of the British cinema. Among these should be mentioned **Mr. Paul Soskin** (born Kertch, South Russia, 1905) whose architectural training and knowledge of European domestic styles should prove a great asset in the construction of British sets; **Count Ludovico Toeplitz de Grand Ry** (born Genoa, 1893), former managing director of the Genoese Terni Electricity Board and producer of 20 films for Cines-Pattaluga; **Mr. Joe Rock** (born New York City, 1893), whose long American film experience is now at the service of British exhibitors; **Mr. Otto Klement** of Garrett-Klement Pictures (born Mor Ostrava, Czechoslovakia), the celebrated continental publisher, play-broker and stage producer; and **Dr. Herbert T. Kalmus** (born Chelsea, Mass., 1881) the distinguished American academe and business man who, together with **Mrs. Kalmus** (born Boston, Mass., 1892), supervises from afar the British development of Technicolour.

Passing from the arena of purely British production to the American companies operating their own Quota-producing units in this country, we find Warner, First National, Paramount and 20th Century-Fox already in the field, and M.G.M. and Radio likely to start work in the near future. Of these, Paramount's English production has hitherto been carried on under wholly British auspices: but we are now informed that **Mr. J. C. Graham** (born Nebraska), Paramount's managing director in this country, has discarded his previous production associations in favour of other plans.

At the Teddington studio of Warner creative control of British production centres in **Mr. Irving Asher** (born San Francisco, 1903) who took up his present position in 1931; production takes place under the management of **Mr. A. M. ("Doc") Salomon** (born California, 1891) who was formerly

Mr. Joe Schenck

superintendent and chief of police for Warner at Burbank, Hollywood, while the producer is **Mr. William ("Buster") Collier, Jnr.** (born New York City, 1902), an actor of long experience on the American stage and screen. There is in addition an American scenario chief.

Production for 20th Century-Fox is in the hands of **Mr. Robert T. Kane** (born Jamestown, New York, 1886). Entering the film business more than 20 years ago, Mr. Kane organised and built the United Studios, California, and after a spell as general manager of Paramount Publix, took administrative control of Les Studios Paramount in Paris in 1930. Directing under Mr. Kane is **Mr. Monty Banks** (born Italy, 1897) whose real name is Maria Bianchi. Mr. Banks' aesthetic contribution to the English cinema includes such films as *Week-end Wives*, *The Compulsory Husband*, *Not so quiet on the Western Front*, *Kiss Me Sergeant*, *My Wife's Family* and *Mind Your Seat*.

It is evident that M.G.M. propose to take full advantage of the new Quota cost regulations in their English production, for we understand that their unit will have the services of at least three distinguished Americans: **Mr. Hunt Stromberg** (born Louisville, Kentucky) whose affiliation to M.G.M. as producer in 1925 was preceded by service as publicity director to the Goldwyn Company, and as personal representative to Thomas H. Ince; **Mr. Ben Goetz,** a laboratory pioneer formerly associated with Erbograph Laboratories and president of Consolidated Film Industries Inc.; and **Mr. Edwin K. O'Brien,** the American editor. We further understand that owing to the dearth of British cutters **Miss Margaret Booth,** American editor of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Camille* and *Romeo and Juliet*, has been granted a permit to work for M.G.M. over here. In the M.G.M. line-up as production representative in England is Mr. Michael Balcon (born Birmingham, 1896).

Concerning the future Quota product of Radio Pictures, information has reached us that a tie-up has been effected between that company and **Mr. Herbert Wilcox** (born Cork, Ireland, 1891).

Dotted here and there through this galaxy of skilled foreign assistance are some British producers and directors. There are Basil Dean (born Croydon, 1887), Alfred Hitchcock (born London, 1900), Victor Saville (born Birmingham, 1897), Norman Loudon (born Campbeltown, N.B., 1902) and John F. Argyle (born Staffordshire, 1911). There is also Isidore Ostrer, whose birthplace is not disclosed in any work of reference, founder of the great G.-B. studios at Shepherd's Bush, now dark and deserted.

To a large extent, therefore, our British cinema, at the outset of its second decade of protected life, will be dependent for its prestige and its profit upon Messrs. Asher, Banks (Bianchi), Biro, Collier, Czinner, Esway, Fairbanks, Goetz, Grune, Hellman, Kalmus, Kane, Klement, Korda, Korda, Mendes, O'Brien, Rock, Salomon, Schach, Schenck, Soskin, Stein, Stromberg, Toeplitz and their colleagues, not to mention the many technicians who have settled on our shores to lend us their expert aid. On these gentlemen and their creative attitude to our English industries, our countryside, our people (and our banking system), we depend for the projection of our national life. On their deep, inborn sense of our history, our heritage and our customs we depend for the dramatisation of our English traditions as well as for the more mundane business of fulfilling our British quota. They have a hard task, but we trust they will not desert us until their efforts have been crowned by success or frustrated by the obstinacy of our English financiers. We hope that not till then will they depart from among us to enjoy the fruits of their labours across the sea.

ALIENS STIFLE

This is an anonymous article. The author is a British Film man, working in a British Studio. Such are the existing conditions, that his reasoned plea on behalf of the British Technician must be published unsigned.

ACCORDING to an editorial in the July number of *W.F.N.*, two policies exist in British film production to-day: to make films for the world (including the American) market, or to make films for the British market. It is true that, financing apart, a product of the first policy is easier to make than a product of the second policy. If a producer has a footing in the American market, he can spend more money on his production. He can afford to import ready-made stars and expert technicians, whose recent work he has seen and applauded. When he has tired of them he can ship them back home and import some more. He gets prestige and tremendous publicity from his ability to employ famous and successful people. And he can honestly explain to his backers that they cannot expect to make money at first; the industry is new; until he came along its scope was negligible; he is one of the few who are introducing British product to the screens of the world; but soon they (the backers) will begin to reap the benefits of their far-sighted policy. In the end he and they talk themselves into the belief that it is always more economical to spend in excess of £50,000 than any smaller sum.

But what sort of industry does this policy build up? Will it in ten years' time still be importing distinguished foreigners? Will it occasionally deign to lift from less ambitious British circles the local talent which these circles have laboriously selected and cultivated? Surely this policy is that of trying to run before you can walk? Is not this the policy which has directly caused the present slump?

Let us examine the second policy: production for the local market. Here it is risky to spend more than £30,000 on a picture. The producer is at once on his mettle. An English visa, a swell flat, and oodles of charm will cut no ice in this market. The producer must know his job to the full. And he must have experience of local conditions and of local talent among players and technicians. He can afford only one lesser star and one featured player. In fact his brain must be as reliable as his bank balance.

Under neither policy is it worth anyone's while to promote one single production, for no producer can guarantee a satisfactory financial return on one film. The only sane way to go about it is to raise a sum of money scaled to a continuous production policy on the understanding that losses may be sustained in the first year at least; that the next batch of product will break even; and that the policy will only expand if the financial returns justify such expansion. It is then up to the producer and his technical associates. But if they choose to tackle the more modest policy of the local market, they will be starting with both feet on the ground. *They* will be the experts, not a bunch of importees who would not have left their own country if they could have got as good an offer there as here, and who tend to find fault with their new subordinates rather than adapt themselves to local conditions. They will have to select, train, and encourage new blood, backing their own judgment of promising talent instead of amateurishly hiring ready-made "aces." And, incidentally, they will be building for the future a solid and expanding national industry instead of starting in top gear a plant designed to work expensively, but unable to guarantee anything but a "hit or miss" standard of product, and which can only claim international qualities by the obvious absence of any national qualities.

ONE of the worst aspects of the policy of trying to break into the world market before conquering your own is that the preponderance of aliens in key positions in the industry not only tends to produce a product lacking national character, but also develops an unhealthy inferiority complex in the rest of the technical staff, who are of local growth. The British technician is a product of a system which trains its youth to respect its elders. The youth of this country develops more slowly and matures later than the youth of most other nations. The young British technician develops more rapidly under the guidance of men of his own country than under aliens, who, strangers in a strange land, often fail to adapt themselves to local conditions. It is harder for a technician to produce good results in a foreign country than in his own, particularly at first. (For that matter a local technician who has become accustomed to working in one studio finds it irksome sud-

BRITISH TALENT

denly to change over to another studio in the same city.) The alien is concerned with getting immediately good results, not in building slowly to achieve a permanent improvement. For, firstly, he is not likely to have his contract and permit renewed if he fails to deliver the goods pretty quickly. And he always has the anxiety of wondering how long he will be allowed to stay, and how long it will be wise to stay, bearing in mind the fact that as he was not much sought after when he left his own country, it may not be long before he is completely forgotten there and his prospects of home employment have entirely evaporated.

For these reasons the alien expert tends to watch his own interests in relation to those of his employer rather than to train the staff under him who should be his immediate concern, and whose subsequent competence should be the measure of the value of the expert's present services. If, however, the alien looks forward to settling permanently in the country of his adoption, there is all the more temptation for him not to develop qualities in his subordinates that might bring them on to qualify for the position which he himself holds.

One finds cases of alien editors asking their assistants in the presence of their employers: "What have you been cutting this with? A blow-pipe?" One never hears the employer retort: "It is high time the assistants were taught better." And if the assistant answers back in these circumstances he knows there will be trouble for him when he gets back into the cutting-room.

Or take the case of the expert foreign cameraman who orders his assistants to shoot exteriors in bad weather conditions, and then shows the work privately to the producers in the projection room with the comment: "How the hell can I get good results when the staff you give me goes out and shoots a bunch of crap like that?"

THERE are numbers of technicians in this country who are condemned to believe that they can never become first-rate in their profession because they never get that chance which is the legitimate adventure due to all promising talent. True, some of them do not deserve ever to get that chance for the simple reason that they should never have been brought into the industry at all. Nearly every production venture recently inaugurated in this country has been guilty of nepotism, both in bringing into the industry new blood that is unsuited for the work, either by temperament, upbringing, or sheer dumbness; and in promoting to positions of authority incompetent assistants; the only qualification in every case being blood relationship with the powers that be.

However, in spite of the fact that entry into the British film industry is entirely unregulated and no comprehensive scheme of training has yet been introduced, a considerable proportion of the technicians at present working or unemployed are potentially of the first class, and a sympathetic combing of the industry would soon surprise them into the light of recognition.

As it is, promotion in our industry is largely a haphazard, negative affair, based on sudden necessities which leave no other course open. And the surprise of the employer and technician concerned, when it turns out that the promotion was justified, is inevitably followed by a canny feeling on the technician's part that if the employer had had more faith and guts, promotion, and the promotion of others still subordinate, could have taken place long before.

In a recent case, a camera operator of long standing, who was obviously ripe for promotion to control of lighting, was ignored and put off by his employers for many months. He has now gone and proved his qualifications to a rival firm, who are successfully employing him in a position which none but aliens hold in his original studio. In another case it took six conversations to induce a certain producer even to examine the work of a new British director. Next day the producer offered the Britisher a film for immediate preparation and direction.

And so one could go on quoting instances of the neglect to build within our country, and of the easy, weak policy of looking abroad for established talent. The slump proves that too many producers were incompetent even when supported by the cream of alien talent. Too many of them liked to make expensive films so that they could pay themselves expensive fees. When their films flopped they floated other companies, and up they bobbed again. Now that the slump has taken the market value even out of their charm, let us take confidence and learn from our experiences. Let us believe in ourselves, welcoming the foreigner more judiciously, building our own industry for the exploitation of our own markets, before we begin beating our heads against the wall of opposition with which the Americans have surrounded their market. Then, as we begin to record small but definite results, and begin to make films strangely British and strangely likeable to our own people, we may again attract the honest sympathy of financial interests—those financial interests which have lately retired hurt, drained of resources, and sore at being proved suckers by promoters who were no more film-minded than parasites ever are.

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PEOPLE OF THE STUDIOS

● Great Britain

Denham

I, Claudius abandoned because of a car accident, and *Red Shoes* because of script trouble, Merle Oberon has been dogged by bad luck this season. *The Divorce of Lady X* is a final attempt to get her into a picture before her return to Hollywood—an adaptation by Robert Sherwood of the former West End stage hit "Counsel's Opinion," it was originally filmed by Korda as a Paramount quickie featuring Robert Donat. Donat was again debated for the lead, but insurance companies refused a policy owing to his numerous asthma breakdowns. Tim Whelan, directing *Lady X*, comes from Indiana . . . started stage career at the age of nine, later appearing on Broadway. Worked for Hal Roach way back in 1921, and lent a hand on most of the Harold Lloyd silents. After working as a scenario writer in association with Capra, came to England, writing and directing *Aunt Sally*, *The Camels are Coming*, and *Two's Company*. Latest pictures: *The Mill on the Floss*, *Farewell Again*, *Action for Slander*.

* * * *

Director Harold Schuster, former Fox editor in Hollywood, making good progress on *Follow the Sun*, with Annabella, Norah Swinburne, David Niven, Paul Lukas, and Stewart Rome. Annabella makes another for Schuster and New World, *Let's Go to Paris*, before her Hollywood debut.

* * * *

Thornton Freeland, over from Pinewood, where he made *Jericho* with Paul Robeson, to direct Jack Hulbert as a millionaire banker in *Paradise for Two*. . . . Patricia Ellis gets the feminine lead, with songs by Michael Spoliansky and dresses by René Hubert.

* * * *

George Périnal and Mrs. Natalie Kalmus in charge of photography and colour on *The Drum*, new Sabu picture . . . recently with Zoltan Korda in remote parts of the Welsh mountains matching scenes taken on the North West Frontier in India. A camera unit of twelve men on the top slopes of the Matterhorn, shooting backgrounds for *The Challenge*, new L.F.P. production to be directed by Milton Rosmer and produced by Gunther Stapenhorst. . . . Luis Trenker in charge of climbing sequences.

* * * *

John Maxwell now financially interested in Mayflower Productions, formed by Director Erich Pommer and Actor Charles Laughton. . . . Maxwell says "This is only a practical commerical unit in as much as the star and director are gambling their services to share in the profits." First picture will be based on Somerset Maugham's *Vessel of Wrath*, to be followed by Clemence Dane's busking story *St. Martin's Lane*, and Daphne du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*. Elsa Lanchester co-stars with Laughton in the first.

Following the slump period Korda is negotiating with the hourly workmen to readjust all difference of opinion on working conditions. This is being done on an amicable basis between the representative committee of the workmen and Mr. Korda personally.

W.F.N. has heard recently that technical troubles in the Denham Laboratory have caused considerable delays to productions, necessitating reshooting of certain sections. These troubles are now under investigation.

Sound City

Part documentary, *The Last Adventurers* depicts the hardships and dangers in the life of Arctic trawlermen. Roy Kellino, cameraman at Gainsborough, G.-B. and Elstree, is directing; Roy Emerton, tough boss of the line-gang in *The Great Barrier*, starring.

First picture by George King Productions is *Remember What?* with Claude Dampier. Action takes place in the 'eighties . . . the penny farthing bicycles providing Mr. Dampier with good comedy material. David MacDonald, late assistant at Paramount, is director.

Pinewood

Maurice ("Pennies from Heaven") Johnson, song writing for Jessie Matthews' *Sailing Along* . . . graduated from church organist to dance-band pianist, later orchestrating and conducting big Broadway shows. With the advent of talkies teamed with Irving Berlin, then worked on Chaplin's *City Lights*. With Paramount before his Gaumont contract.

* * * *

Gaumont-British has twelve pictures on the slate for the coming season. . . . Jessie Matthews goes into *Sailing Along*, *Sparkle*, and *Glamorous Lady;* Anna Lee into *The Unconquered Woman* and *A Girl Must Live;* Anna Neagle into *Look Out for Love* and *The Show Goes On*; and Nova Pilbeam, after *The Girl Was Young* (new title for Hitchcock's *A Shilling for Candles*) gets *The Wedding Dream* and *Empty World*. Two others, as yet uncasted, are *The Lady of La Paz* and *The Girl Pat*.

* * * *

Lee Garmes, co-directing *The Sky's the Limit* with Jack Buchanan . . . came to England to direct Bergner's *Dreaming Lips*. Formerly with Fox and Paramount, made *Zoo in Budapest*, *My Lips Betray*, *I am Suzanne*, *Crime Without Passion* and *The Scoundrel*. Mara Losseff, a fugitive of the Russian revolution, starring with Buchanan . . . spotted by Richard Tauber a year or two back, made her name on the continental stage. Visited London on holiday last winter, and J.B. signed her on.

Buchanan's second film currently shooting . . . *Sweet Devil* with Bobbie Howes and Jean Gillie. Latter is another Buchanan discovery—she played a half-minute part in his *Brewster's Millions*, and he signed her as leading lady for his next show.

Hazel Terry, actress grand-niece of Ellen Terry, plays feminine lead in *Missing from Home*, picture of London street life. John Paddy Carstairs directs, with Julien Vedey and Wally Patch in the cast.

Worton Hall

Erich von Stroheim and Dita Parlo, co-stars of the French film *La Grande Illusion*, making their bow in British pictures. . . John Loder, Clair Luce and Giles Isham support them in *Mademoiselle Docteur*, a spy story. Edmond Greville, responsible for *Remous* and *Marchand d'Armour*, is director, Max Schach producer.

* * * *

Twelve years dramatic and literary critic on a leading Berlin paper, Schach is one of many executives who entered films by way of journalism. In 1920 he joined UFA as scenario editor, later becoming an independent producer and associate of Karl Grune. At the invitation of Carl Laemmle he took on the general managership of Universal in Europe, and afterwards the general managership of Emelka, controlling four studios, eighty theatres and a distributing organisation. To England in 1934, and produced *Abdul the Damned* for B.I.P. In 1935 he formed the Capitol Film Corporation, in 1936 Trafalgar Film Productions, and this year Buckingham Film Productions.

Teddington

Max Miller preparing for further exploits of Educated Evans, Edgar Wallace's breezy tipster.

* * * *

Joc Orton and John Meehan, comedy screenwriters, signed by Irving Asher . . . *Dr. Satan*, their second for Warners, scheduled for early production.

Joc Orton, chiefly responsible for Jessie Matthews' first screen test and co-director of her first picture, collaborated on several Hulbert-Courtneidge comedies . . . scripted *Everything is Thunder* and *Turn of the Tide* for G.-B. and *The Flying Doctor* for Fox. Recently wrote *Transatlantic Trouble* for Max Miller, and *Oh, Mr. Porter* for Will Hay.

Islington

The Crazy Gang has signed on for three years with Gainsborough—next picture is *Alf's Button*, comedy story by W. A. Darlington. Rene Houston booked as their leading lady.

Robert Stevenson, director of *Tudor Rose*, *King Solomon's Mines*, and *Non-Stop New York*, directing *Owd Bob* with Will Fyffe and Margaret Lockwood . . . he and John Goldman have been shooting sheep-dog trial sequences up on Exmoor. After he's through with the picture, Stevenson hopes to take a year's vacation in Cornwall—to write a play.

● America

Paramount

Rouben Mamoulian, director of *High, Wide and Handsome*, has scored again . . . this time by mixing music, history and drama. Born in Caucasus, Mamoulian graduated from a law school at Moscow University, turned to the theatre, and at the age of 24 had produced a play in London. George Eastman, president of Eastman Kodak, took him to the States where he scored a success with Maurice Maeterlink's "Sister Beatrice," following it up with "Porgy," which ran for three years on Broadway with a cast recruited from shops, cabarets and streets in Harlem. Thence to Hollywood to make *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Song of Songs*, *Queen Christina*, *Becky Sharp* and *The Gay Desperado* . . . each made with the Mamoulian touch, a flare for the unusual, and disregard for traditional treatment.

* * * *

John Barrymore signed for *Bulldog Drummond Comes Back*. Louis King directing. Reginald Denny in the cast.

United Artists

Selznick planning to give the long-suffering newspaper profession a break . . . starting production on *Freedom of the Press*, depicting the history of the Associated Press of America and the part it played in the development of American journalism. Film to be made after the *Lloyds of London* style.

Toss up whether Selznick's *Nothing Sacred* or Goldwyn's *Marco Polo* comes out of the studio first. William Wellman directs the former, Archie Mayo the second, with Fredric March and Gary Cooper in the respective leads. Ben Hecht wrote the screenplay of *Nothing Sacred* . . . once a Chicago journalist, Hecht has scripted many films to success, among them *Scarface*, *Design for Living*, *Viva Villa*, *Crime Without Passion*, *Barbary Coast*, and *The Scoundrel* (awarded Academy Prize for the best original story of 1935). He has now signed on with Goldwyn to write *Sweet Land of Liberty*, satire on the Federal Theatres.

Seems as though United Artists' executives and actors are intermixing. . . . Producer Walter Wanger and Director Frank Borzage playing atmosphere roles in *Stella Dallas*, Lubitsch toying with the idea of playing Napoleon and Leslie Howard threatening to turn producer.

General exodus of Wanger stars from Hollywood, as the producer insists that an unbroken spell in the Film City brings on staleness. Joan Bennett goes into repertory after finishing *I Met My Love Again*, and co-star Henry Fonda goes onto Broadway. Sylvia Sidney stars in the Theatre Guild production of Ben Hecht's *To Quito and Back*, Madeleine Carroll is holiday-making in Europe, and Charles Boyer is Paris bound. Wanger himself is planning an elaborate picture to be made in Italy . . . at present assembling information on production facilities and technical crews. He hopes to cement friendly relations between film industries of Italy and the States.

Warner Bros.

Mervyn LeRoy producing *The Great Garrick* with Brian Aherne, Worcester-born star, in the name-part. . . . Olivia de Haviland and Edward Everett Horton in the cast. Ernst Vajda, scriptwriter of *A Woman Rebels* and *Man in Possession*, responsible for the original screenplay. LeRoy's last four pictures, *Three Men on a Horse*, *Anthony Adverse*, *The King and the Chorus Girl*, and *They Won't Fogret*, all big hits.

After one more picture Paul Muni plans a couple of years' holiday for rest and travel . . . talking of heading for the Orient, across Siberia and Russia. Final story not yet set . . . he has turned down *Beethoven*, *Panama Canal*, and *Kimberley*.

Pat O'Brian, George Brent, and Wayne Morris putting over some tough stuff in *Submarine D1*, which Lloyd Bacon is shooting. Commander Frank Wead, author of *China Clipper* and *Sea Devils*, wrote the original.

M.G.M.

Carle Laemmle, jun., signed as producer as M.G.M. . . . among his big pictures for Universal are *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Show Boat*, *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man* and *Journey's End*. While still in his teens he was writing, casting, editing and supervising, and in 1929 was appointed general manager of Universal.

Harry Rapf, one-time actor in a Denver minstrel show and now one of the company's leading producers, has two productions on the floor. . . Wallace Beery and James Stewart in *Bad Men of Brimstone*, and Robert Montgomery, Robert Benchley, Una Merkel, and Micky Rooney in *Live, Love, and Learn*.

Luise Rainer teams up with Spencer Tracy in *Big City*, a racketeering picture. Norman ("*Fury*") Krasna wrote the screen story, Frank Borzage directs.

Adrian, ace Hollywood dress-designer, on the prowl in Paris for authentic clothes for *Marie Antoinette* . . . production scheduled to start soon with Norma Shearer in the top spot.

Saratoga, which Jean Harlow only three-quarter finished, now completed and released with Mary Dees doubling for the star. Miss Dees has pocketed a seven-year contract as a result of her work.

* * * *

Shorts, almost annihilated by double-feature programmes, are coming into their own . . . in point of volume Metro leads with Paramount, Radio, Columbia, and Warners as runners up. On the Metro schedule are four Pete Smith shorts (Olympic champions, bad cheques, professional football and radium), six *Crime Does Not Pay* films, six miniature operettas, ten Carey Wilson psychology briefs, ten *Believe It or Not* historical mysteries, several straight historicals and travelogues, twelve *Our Gang* comedies, and four Robert Benchley scientific and educational subjects (*How to Start the Day*, *How to Raise a Baby*, *How to Figure Income Tax* and *How to Make an Impression*).

And Others . . . .

James Cagney making *Something to Sing About*, reputedly his last for Grand National. Victor Schertzinger wrote and directs.

Capra still refusing to report at Columbia . . . says his contract has been violated. Columbia state his next is *Chopin*, and that Sidney Buchman has been scripting.

Arthur Kober writing screenplay for his own Broadway success *Having Wonderful Time* . . . Radio to shoot.

A Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers co-starrer to be made in technicolor after Astaire's *Damsel in Distress* is off the floor. Also Radio.

● Australia

Stuart F. Doyle, managing director of Cinesound, Ltd., is quitting production in Australia, and the fate of the company is in the balance. Doyle says that the Government has given little encouragement to production, that the Quota Acts are badly designed, and that his own efforts to point out faults to the Government have been ignored. States that no trade knowledge has been apparent in the designing of Acts for the industry, and that local production is doomed unless revolutionary methods are adopted.

A few months back Doyle was forced out of Greater Union Theatres Ltd., because of his insistence that the company should split with Hoyts Theatres. Greater Union has now decided to break away, which may lead to the return of Doyle despite his antagonistic outlook on the picture business. Meanwhile Norman Rydge, succeeding him at the helm, is left with the problem of where to get films. Charles Munro, of another circuit, recently tied up Columbia, Universal, United Artists, 20th Century-Fox and Warners, and both Paramount and Metro have their own houses. Rydge claims to know the solution, but will not divulge it.

● Argentine

President Justo's suggestion that all picture houses close down at midnight has caused considerable dissension in the daily papers. Justo argues that it is physically and mentally bad for the working population to hold out until three and four in the morning, when the late picture shows finish.

Members of the Society of Cinema Owners argue that the customary minimum of five full-length features per programme positively forbids the cutting of hours. They claim the loss of midnight patronage would be too heavy.

The following placard was recently posted on all church doors in Buenos Aires: "Fathers and mothers, recognise your responsibilities. A single hour passed in the obscurity of a cinema that shows a bad film, destroys in the soul of your children a year's work accomplished by the Church, the home and the school." And the notice was followed by a list of current releases, under the headings "Acceptable," "Poor, "Bad."

Five Films

by John Grierson

A Day at the Races
An M.G.M. film, directed by Sam Wood, with the Marx Brothers.

Easy Living
A Paramount picture, directed by Mitchell Leisen, with Edward Arnold, Jean Arthur and Ray Milland.

Said O'Reilly to McNab
A Gainsborough picture, directed by William Beaudine, with Will Fyffe and Will Mahoney.

THERE is, on West End screens, a very pretty sense of how the public peace or complacency can be best disturbed. At a time when the country is asking what is wrong with the Labour Party, Messrs. Attlee, Bevin and Greenwood might learn from it. In easy foot work, length of reach and unexpectedness of crosses, they are by all odds inferior in equipment to the Marx Brothers. I recommend *A Day at the Races* as a classical exercise in Opposition. Messrs. A, B and G may catch from it, if they care, that secret of high anarchy without which no body of criticism (His Majesty's or any other) was ever worth the bother of maintaining. It may help them if they regard Groucho's home for rich neurasthenics as a pleasant commentary on our Defence Departments and the plight of the unfortunate race horse Nelly—so pestered by duns that it has to be accommodated on the fifteenth floor and fed on the bedroom mattresses—as not dissimilar to that of the League of Nations. But, as people who are too serious by half and not enough, they will mostly learn from the Tactic of Inconsequence.

When faced with the Sublime (Niagara, Baldwin or Mussolini) Kant from Koenigsberg recommends, like any trade union leader, a snivelling glance to the starry heavens above, though it is difficult to see why when he so accurately defines the sublime as "that the mere ability to think which shows a faculty of mind *far surpassing any standard of sense*." Being less provincial philosophers, the Marx Brothers take the definition at its word. With a whoop they are round the corner of Nonsense and what happens to the Kantian devotee is nobody's business. At the very least it is what Groucho does to Margaret Dumont in the operating theatre of his neurasthenic sanatorium. In what my critical stable mate across the page describes as a "nightmare tangle of voodoo, dentistry and hairdressing," the one thing which is finally disentangled is the divine symposium of the dignities and snobberies which Miss Dumont so happily represents in every Marx Brothers comedy. Sociological students will appreciate that nothing is so likely to perform this feat, as a "tangle of voodoo, dentistry and hairdressing."

It may be that others, more gently, have applied the same critical tactic, and all good satirists do. The special secret of the Marx Brothers is in the physical quality they have been able to add. We have had nothing like their sense of direct action since Gulliver invited the insults of the arboreal Yahoos. The mechanistic persistence of Chico's crookedness, the enthusiastic sacrifice of sense and sanity to speed and certainty on the part of Groucho, the mad dashes of Harpo after any and every indiscriminate suggestion, have a passion about them which no statement in a slower medium could hope to match. It is in this that the Marxes make their chief contribution to the cinema. They have made its physical speed an essential part of their art. Anyone who has seen the relatively crude efforts on the music-hall stage to achieve a similar frenzy—whether in the antics of the Crazy Gang at the Palladium or in the vaudeville version of the Marx Brothers themselves—must recognise the importance of this cinematic asset.

In one matter *A Day at the Races* represents a dangerous deviation from the true Marxist doctrine. It has been described by good critics as "striking a perfect balance between fantasy and reality," meaning that the background of young musical comedy love, with tearful heroine and hero bellowing to the moon (reality), fits with perfect balance into the extravagance of the Marxian antics (fastasy). The other view is that having gone so far to debunk the niceties of human intercourse it would have been simple decency on the part of the Brothers to debunk love's young dream as well. In previous films they have done it and I am sure only considerations of the box-office has dictated respect in this instance. Their previous treatment of love's young dream has lost them half a million dollars a picture.

Be that as it may, there is enough in this epic of social sabotage to make *A Day at the Races* a very distinguished performance. Our students, Attlee, Bevin and Greenwood have only to find political equivalents for mixing a Negro sing-song with the Pied Piper, middle-aged romance with paper hanging, Ascot with a traffic jam and a ceremonial reception with a night in Haarlem; and the quality of His Majesty's Opposition will be up to standard in no time.

WHAT is left of Humpty Dumpty after the Marx Brothers are done with him is, with almost equal skill, reconstructed in *Easy Living*. This is a racy and amusing film which, in technical nicety, must be the despair of every director in Britain. If Cinderella stories must be told and the miracle of coincidence brought to solve the problem of poverty and wealth, then this is as good a day-dream as any. The girl is pretty and deserving, without being a bore about it; the young millionaire is too up-to-date and knowing to give any hint of patronage; and the contraption by which they are brought together is as happy and various in invention as anything out of Heath Robinson. The sable coat falls from heaven on the shoulders of the passing poor and, invested in this badge of plutocratic favour, it is simple logic that every other luxury should follow. We have the evidence in our own beloved film trade of how confidence, a cigar and the broken accent of Art can take a cool million from the City. It is a mere matter of arithmetic what a sable coat and a suspected liaison with Mr. Bull of Wall Street can do to the more innocent gentry of the hotels and the sales rooms. Faith, as ever, delivers the necessary limousines.

What I find most interesting about the film is that, in reducing the parties to their common human elements, it effectively abolishes the distinction of rich and poor altogether. Who can complain of Wealth when he beats his wife like any honest man, allows himself good-naturedly to be called a "greasy capitalist," and knows rather less about finance than the lucky pin of his secretary? He is obviously a pleasant and human fellow. Beat your wives happily together, the film seems to say, and what's in a bank balance?

I HAD better mention too, the British film, *Said O'Reilly to McNab*, which I saw, as it ought to be seen, in Glasgow. There have been better Glasgow accents than Will Fyffe's—he could not compare in virtuosity with the late lamented Tommie Lorne—but it will ring a bell anywhere between Bridgton Cross and Gilmorehill. Here, Fyffe and Mahoney play out a Scots-Irish comedy in which canny and uncanny crookeries are evenly matched. The humour is robust rather than subtle and so is the acting, though Fyffe, if encouraged, might easily lose his

REVIEWED

by Basil Wright

Woman Chases Man

A United Artists film, directed by John Blystone, with Miriam Hopkins, Joel McCrea, Charles Winninger, and Erik Rhodes.

Wild Money

A Paramount picture, with Edward Everett Horton, Lynne Overman, and Louise Campbell.

John Grierson—continued

habit of music-hall emphasis and become a good film actor. In one episode, in particular, where, as the cautious Scot, he becomes gradually and by nuance entangled in a confidence trick, he puts in some quiet and distinguished acting, and shows he has the right idea. But quiet acting is not the sort of thing we are encouraging these days. In our desperate search for narrative speed, and a very proper search too, quietness is giving every director the jitters. The elements of punctuation will come later, and better so. We have been trying to make films with nothing but, for the past ten years.

The emphasis to take on this *O'Reilly* picture is that, like several recent British comedies, it has an improved sense of speed and dialogue, and Gainsborough may compliment themselves on a picture which is bound to be a great success. Consider it as taking a further step in the humble development of real British cinema, and it becomes even an important picture. One pity—and I hope there is nothing psychological about it—is that it makes the same disastrous mistake as the recent British comedy *Storm in a Teacup*. It does not know how to finish. There is a damaging longueur in which Mahoney dances to the point of boredom and an idiotic and extraneous Spanish dance is added to that. The effect is to break down the atmosphere of speed and expectancy which has been skilfully built up over the length of the picture.

Gainsborough might also look into their choice of supporting characters. There are one or two duffers who stick out like sore thumbs. But, all in all, it is good to see this sort of thing coming along and so regularly—in spite of the British film depression. I confess I expected to see the sun rise from another quarter than Islington, but Islington is a real part of London, and I am glad to be wrong. If rollicking and robustious comedy is the best thing to do—and there seems no question—we had better lower our noses and give it every help we can.

SALUTE to Miriam Hopkins, who could act every female off our Shaftesbury Avenue stages, and makes the screen too narrow for several Hollywood big shots we could mention. She is with us again in a film which means just nothing at all—except perhaps that there is more and more wood-alcohol getting into the Clicquot so carefully imported by Lubitsch and other pre-Hitler emigrés. Just a farce; location, one mansion and a convenient tree; cast, four good players and the beautiful Hopkins; story, not worth a synopsis. Sam Goldwyn, who produced, has always been good at starring-vehicles, and there is no other reason for this film, which presents unsullied by technical tricks, "a lady richly clad as she, beautiful exceedingly."

These sort of films are really very interesting, because the production values tend to be lower than usual. In a way this is no exception. Its directorial sense and its timing are far below *Easy Money* or *Love is News*. The scenario is no more than a clothes peg for farcical situations. The sets are ordinary—though very competently photographed. Stock characters repeat lines which weren't terribly funny way back when Schnozzle Durante was at high school.

There remains Miriam Hopkins. And why not, just for once, sit back and enjoy talent and personality? The camera faithfully records the least quiver of a come-hitherish eyelash; the microphone lovingly presents each nuance of a voice which has been really trained to do its job. Technique? Yes, acting technique. Timing? Yes, in terms of muscular control.

She is always a dangerous woman; watch her, in *Woman Chases Man*, chase without mercy, conquer without mercy, and capitulate without mercy. Watch her take charge of a thoroughly uninspired bit of shooting, smash it to bits, and build it up again for her own fantastic ends. Watch her invest some of the surrounding characters with her own peculiar glory. And remember Defoe's preface to *Roxana*—"The story of this beautiful lady is to speak for itself."

Perhaps it is time to remind you not to go and see *Woman Chases Man* unless you are a Hopkins fan, or a Joel McCrea fan for that matter; he has his points, but this time just misses the Gary Cooper possibilities in his so-called part.

Wild Money is an unpretentious little second feature—so unpretentious in fact that it uses the same cafeteria set as *Easy Living*, with which it was double-billed at the Plaza. One seldom notices these share-and-share-alike sets; although they are a good idea and highly economic, one hesitates (from previous experiences) to recommend them to our Home Studios (there's enough hire-purchase atmosphere already). But *revenons à nos Hortons*, for the fun of this film is that whereas we always expect the unexpected to happen to Edward Everett Horton, on this occasion the unexpected happens to us. This mild, exasperated, and slightly suspicious darling we all know so well, suddenly blossoms out as a tough guy, getting all he wants regardless of anything except the strict moral sense without which he would be as naught.

He appears, in fact, as an accountant on a newspaper, interested only in petty-cash economics, and regrettably in love with a good-looking but poisonous little female reporter. The perfect sucker, as usual; until, on a backwoods holiday vacation, he finds himself scooping a terrific kidnapping story for his paper. The other reporters arrive, but Horton, solemnly in charge, does the he-man act, foresees nearly everything (including the fact that he will need a large tractor in Reel 6), and generally makes good. It is here necessary to mention that the reporters are portrayed as such reptilian abominations that one feels that the director has some special grudge against the press.

It may just be possible that Horton exploits the same dramatic ability as Zasu Pitts—and for the same ends. Just as she wrings her hands in slapstick with the same tragic fervour as in *Greed*, but with an added fantasy of exaggeration, so maybe Horton's sudden nervous gestures—the innocent but fearful glance, the smile awry with prescience of a kick in the pants, the attempts, predoomed to frustration, to stand up nobly in a disastrous world—these too may be the fundamentals of more serious possibilities.

Certainly, in this film, when he shoulders his responsibilities, the old gestures remain, but take on a more serious meaning. One might almost, if it were not bad manners to philosophise about trifles, detect in this performance a faint suspicion of the grand tradition.

But this is probably silly season stuff. All in all, the film has that nice open air quality common to many inexpensive Hollywood productions; there is that faint whiff of woodsmoke and open-air cooking which endears us to the Western; and Horton is lovable and slightly stern for a change and brings it off. Let us leave it at that.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS Edited by H. E. Blyth

Review of the Month

A Day at the Races

(Sam Wood—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
The Marx Brothers.

There was a time when Harpo, his strangely soulful face made grotesque by his wig, would pick up the nearest telephone and thoughtfully start eating it. Those were the days when the Marx Brothers were the emotional escapologists of comedy, when they took you to an unhampered world where the only reason was complete lunacy.

There is no comparison, in my submission, between the Marx boys as they were then, and the trio as they are now.

When Groucho talked so fast that you could not understand him until your second or third visit, he was doing more than wisecracking. He was talking for the benefit of every talker who had sometimes flattered himself that he was a wit. Everyone with a tongue in his head must have wanted an option on Groucho's conversation—if only for the pleasure of refusing it.

When Harpo, having eaten his telephone and munched a couple of flowers by way of savoury, dashed like a madman after every blonde in the picture, always pulling out that priceless gag of lifting up his leg so that other people would save him the trouble of having to hold it, he was lifting an audience to a crazy world of life without a libido. I think Harpo was one of the greatest clowns in the world.

Chico, the little man, with his absurd hat and his rich Bowery accent, stood between the two high apostles of imbecility, downtrodden, always making mistakes, finding relief in thumping a piano while Harpo paused in the madness to strum a harp.

Behind them all, necessary counterpoint to their humour, was Zeppo, now retired to the agency business, the good-looking fellow who did nothing but pull the leading lady towards him every once in a while as much as to say "This is where the scenario gives me a love scene." Zeppo was important to the brethren ; he was the mooring mast to their airship humour, bumping them back to earth.

Now in *A Day at the Races*, the new Marx team, humanised with infinite skill by the clever Metro studios, the comedians are not, to me, the Marx Brothers, except in snatches. Groucho still prattles incessantly, sometimes with his old fire. But Harpo, key man of the combination, is subdued. This is a frustrated Harpo, who cannot yelp after the first blonde he sees, who can only chew medical thermometers, a man devoid of a succulent telephone or a tasteful piece of furniture. Chico, perhaps, comes out the best of them now, bewildered Chico who sells a racing tip so thoroughly that by the time he has completed the deal the race is over.

Metro have, as it were, translated the Marx Brothers. They are now slapstick comedians of rare ability, doing their work better than almost any other screen team. But they are not those irresponsible maniacs who spun around like tops in a world where Freud came in at the window as Harpo went out eating the door.

From an audience point of view there is no doubt that Metro are right. Dead right. *Cocoanuts* and the earlier pictures were not big successes. The brethren were not many people's kettle of fish so much as most people's red herrings.

In their new film, which deals with a sanatorium and a racehorse which must win to pay the family mortgage, they have dived into a world of slapstick burlesque, extremely funny stuff which will make you laugh even if you have never previously creased a smile out of a Marx film. To the real Marx admirers the film will be a landmark denoting the position beyond which it was no longer commercially possible for them to make films for a small minority. To cinema-goers as a whole the comedy is a pippin.

—Connery Chappell, *The Sunday Dispatch*

Harpo, Groucho and Chico . . . "A Day at the Races"

King Solomon's Mines

(Robert Stevenson—Gaumont-British.)
Cedric Hardwicke, Paul Robeson, Anna Lee, Roland Young.

King Solomon's Mines is described as "from the novel by Rider Haggard." "From" is the word, though to make its meaning more explicit the phrase "a long way away" ought to have preceded it. Now one cannot complain at the mutilation of Rider Haggard's work in the same way as one complains of the mutilation of the life of Parnell. The book, after all, was a mere thriller, not a classic, and the producer is therefore entitled to add to it or subtract from it anything that he wishes. But at least one is entitled to insist that this cinematic arithmetic should result in an improvement. The producers of *King Soloman's Mines* have improved nothing. They have subtracted much that was good, and added a great deal of nonsense. That the film remains exciting at all is not their fault but Rider Haggard's, since it is the surviving relics of his book that form all the climaxes.

—*Truth*

The film of *King Solomon's Mines* is not so exciting as the book used to be. This is partly due to its age and partly too, no doubt, to jaded taste, but all the same the film has weaknesses from which the book was free. The original story is not so valuable that minor departures from it are necessarily damaging. And in what is anyway fantastic, one is not entitled to grumble about small inaccuracies of custom and language—such as, for example, the convention by which the black men speak decent English but no recognisable Bantu dialect. But it would be insulting to Mr. Robeson to think of him as a small inaccuracy. His fundamentally gentle nature is out of place in the proud and warlike Umbopa as is his velvety Mississippi bass on South Africa's dry and stony tracks. Once Mr. Robeson is engaged for a part, singing becomes inevitable. And *King Solomon's Mines* responds a little ludicrously to operatic treatment. Ungenerous though it seems to say so, this film would probably have been better with a lesser artist in Mr. Robeson's place, and if the interest had been focused more directly on his adventures.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

W.F.N. Selection

A Day at the Races * * *

Easy Living * *

Talking Feet *

Other Films Covered in this Issue

Said O'Reilly to McNab

Woman Chases Man

Wild Money

King Solomon's Mines

Saratoga

God's Country and the Woman

The Show Goes On

On the Avenue

Slave Ship

Michael Strogoff

Dance Under the Gallows

Mad Girl

The Thirteen

Yiddle With His Fiddle

Saratoga

(Jack Conway—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Lionel Barrymore, Frank Morgan, Una Merkel.

Had *Saratoga* been finished, it might not have been one of Miss Harlow's most successful pictures. Curiously and sadly enough, though unfinished, unedited, with the scenes she was unable to play rather desperately tricked and manœuvred, the film asserts over and over again how vital was her personality and how great has been the loss to the movie world. In the role given her here, she had no chance for that special comedy which was her unique gift. This part was not a rowdy one, and it was her talent to make the rowdy charming, absurd, and delightful. It is thus all the more astonishing that what breath of life there is in the picture is in those scenes she had completed. And in those scenes one cannot help but feel the great freshness of her looks and of her youth. The moment she is off the screen, even in this incongruous and doubtless uncongenial stilted part, the film is blurred and dispirited. Of course it is painfully stilted and blurred in the scenes which were fabricated to fill out the sketch and make it a finished story. In this story of race track life, the climax was intended to be a critical race, so near a tie as to require a slow-motion picture for the decision. But as it has been presented without Jean Harlow, it appears on the screen as a mere suggestion, a hint of what might have been a climax. And since films are made the way they are, Miss Harlow herself appears for one brief final farewell moment, and all the intervening dreary, confused scenes are forgotten and the whole film seems alive again.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Critical Summary.

The picture is little more than a museum piece, the unfinished swan-song of a star. Miss Harlow may not have been a great actress, but she succeeded in a medium which can find a vivid and vital personality of greater value than histrionic ability. No one could have been more brilliantly suited to those slick, high-speed comedy romances which Hollywood makes so well. She overcame the early handicap of being, as the original platinum blonde, little more than a freak beauty, and achieved her masterpiece in the name part of "Blonde Bombshell." Her place will be hard to fill.

God's Country and the Woman

(William Keighley—Paramount.)
George Brent, Beverley Roberts, Alan Hale.

God's Country and the Woman is conventional outdoors stuff, indebted for what interest it may possess to the work of George Brent, and the fact that it is photographed in Technicolor. The colour is perhaps a little better than that in *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, the story a good deal worse. Mr. Brent is a Montague of the backwoods, Beverley Roberts the last of the Capulets. The rival lumber kings have carried on a feud for years, and at the moment the story opens their followers are just beginning to beat each other up and take pot-shots with Winchesters—apparently a legal proceeding in this neck of the woods. Mr. Brent is an easy, likeable actor, never wholly bogus, and if we must have tough heroines for these open spaces, I suppose Beverley Roberts will do as well as anybody.

—George Campbell, *The Bystander*

God's Country and the Woman is a highly-coloured melodrama of the logging camps ("Only God can make a tree," as the song says) aptly presented in Technicolor's best blues and greens and russets. It is the old story, first told by James Oliver Curwood fifteen years ago, of the easy-going Easterner who finds himself unwittingly helping a girl lumber-boss against the high-handed methods of his own brother's camp. It has all the zest of the old screen classics, not to mention the fighting. The star of the piece is pre-eminently God's Country, its woods and waters and wide skies lending themselves generously to the colour camera. There is always something formidable in the felling of giant timbers, the rush of hewn limbs through the air, the uprush of spray as they strike the river currents. There is a quality, too, in the spreading of green lands flat to the blue horizon, the pearly skies of early morning, the bright translucence of hill water.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Critical Summary.

The criticism, made of this picture and of colour pictures in general, that the colour detracts from the value of the story is not altogether sound, for with one exception all Technicolor films have been notably weak in their stories. The exception, "A Star is Born," proved that, with a strong story, the colouring of the film becomes a secondary consideration in the mind of the audience.

Her place will be hard to fill . . . Jean Harlow in "Saratoga"

The Show Goes On

(Basil Dean—A.T.P.).

Gracie Fields, Owen Nares, John Stuart.

Perhaps, after all, Gracie Fields is such a supreme artist in her own right that the merit or demerit of her films is a trifling matter. Anyway, it is nice to think so. Here she is a Lancashire mill-hand who leaps to fame from the local pantomime chorus. A composer teaches her concert singing, which is a flop until she burlesques his songs, which wounds him deeply. He sails away and dies, but she makes good at Drury Lane, and there is a boy friend from the home town. Gracie's numbers are good, and she is now astonishingly groomed. She sings to a troop-ship from the Queen Mary and leads a spectacular finale with great spirit.

Homely domestic humour abounds, and Horace Hodges, John Stuart, Arthur Sinclair, Edward Rigby, and Amy Veness are well cast. Billy Merson had a brief role. I was sorry for Owen Nares, who, in a Vandyke beard, plays with gentle persuasiveness a composer of tunes which are unspeakably banal. There are some quite bad minor performances, and I wonder who will find the story convincing. But the whole thing has a slapdash breeziness of its own.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Gracie Fields pays a sentimental farewell to home-made movies and demonstrates once again how immeasurably superior as an artist she is to any film material she has yet been given.

Gracie is the mill-girl who makes good all over again here, but this time it is less of a frolic and more of a real life story. Parts of it are based on incidents in Gracie's own life. Apart from Gracie's unashamed sincerity, which gets away with dramatic murder, there are little things which give moments of a hackneyed story a sudden ring of truth. Gracie, with dark brown "wireless rings," a curl again, a wind-swept pierrot concert party at Colwyn Bay, the interminable train journeys of a third-rate music-hall tour. Moral seems to be that what seems easy at the Palladium to-day had a tough break getting by at the Rochdale Empire in 1926, even with Professor Augustino's sea-lions topping the bill. The Queen Mary just beats Owen Nares for second starring honours.

—Guy Morgan, *The Daily Express*

Critical Summary.

Mr. Basil Dean and the English studios seem as far away as ever from solving the problem of Miss Gracie Fields. Here is the greatest money-making artiste of the screen, and no one is able to decide what to do with her. It seems impossible for them to transfer that exuberant personality to the screen in a story worthy of her undeniably great talent.

"King Solomon's Mines"

On the Avenue

(Roy del Ruth—20th Century-Fox.)

Dick Powell, Alice Faye, Madeleine Carroll.

The Avenue is Park Avenue, which is the Millionaires' Row of New York, and the story tells us how "the richest girl in the world" resents a parody of her home life in an impertinent revue. To get her revenge, the girl buys the revue, but love and doughnuts at a coffee stall lead to a fairly happy ending. Dick Powell gets better and better. He sings attractive Irving Berlin songs with tremendous success. But Dick is dissatisfied. He wants to play in a film in which he will not have to sing. He would like to play the sort of light comedy hero from whom Robert Montgomery is trying to escape. Anyhow, whether he succeeds in his ambition or not, *On the Avenue* is high-grade entertainment, with Dick at his best, with Alice Faye more likeable than in almost any of her previous films, and with Madeleine Carroll carrying off in style the part of the rich girl who runs away, at the well-known last minute, from a wedding with a bumptious explorer.

—Seton Margrave, *The Daily Mail*

On the Avenue is Chateau Hollywood '37. Irving Berlin has written four or five songs, Dick Powell, Alice Faye and Madeleine Carroll provide romance, and the three Ritz brothers are still trying harder than the Marx brothers, without much luck.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Talking Feet

(John Baxter—U.K. Films.)

Hazel Ascot, Jack Barty.

If there is anyone now active in British film production who can put the authentic hall-mark of British character into a film, it seems to me that it is John Baxter. Not that *Talking Feet* is a great film in the sense some of us like to retain for "great" in a sphere notorious for its abuse of superlatives. But it is a good film: and I have seen none better for its alert and instinctive seizure of just those essentials in dialogue, stars, and minor types as well as in acting, which may be held to exemplify what, in screen art, is peculiarly and exclusively British. This is a comedy with an East End of London setting, and when Mr. Baxter has the camera pause briefly before a good, plain, eloquent Cockney face, we feel that it is such a face that all may understand, and here for a thrilling moment the British mood is fully revealed. It is the same with the market scenes. This could have developed into an excellent documentary of the East End of London. The shots are excellent in their lifelikeness. There is a rich, ripe sense of character, a relish for mordant wit, a salty tang in the atmosphere that the film engenders, and an honest homeliness in it all.

British film production need not fear Hollywood, nor lean upon Quotas or any other form of protection, if it can turn out any more successes like *Talking Feet*, even though it does make too many concessions to an old form of entertainment.

—*The Birmingham Mail*

Slave Ship

(Tay Garnett—20th Century-Fox.)

Warner Baxter, Wallace Beery, Elizabeth Allen, Mickey Rooney.

Slave Ship harbors a crew of hardy fellows who make their living transporting blacks from the African coast to an illegitimate market on this side. Wallace Beery is the meanest, Mickey Rooney is the funniest, and Warner Baxter changes over about midway from callous to noble. His change is in character, however, for he meets Elizabeth Allen, and that is where the plot starts. All their goings-on are planted against the bloody career of a bad ship. Tay Garnett, who directed *China Seas* with such gusto, has shrewdly emphasised this phase of the story, and has given the Albatross a character so sturdy that the events aboard ship have a lot more meaning than they might otherwise have had. He has made a true spectacle of the slave scenes in the hold of the vessel, and the escape sequences when the ship nears St. Helena. This is by no means a *Mutiny on the Bounty* or a *Captains Courageous*. There is a certain superficial and unspectacular quality about most of it that throws the big scenes out of proportion. The characters are given little grooves to play in, and don't ever become people at all.

—Katherine Best, *Stage*

In a word, it is a colorful tale of the sea, with some breath-taking marine shots and a narrative that may tax your credulity but never your eyes. We wish though, that Mr. Zanuck's men would give up playing "Rule Britannia" every time the English are mentioned; it's getting to be almost as pat as an Amos and Andy theme song.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Michael Strogoff

(George Nicholls—RKO Radio.)

Anton Walbrook, Akim Tamiroff, Elizabeth Allen, Margot Grahame, Fay Bainter.

The Russian business is an old story now and has, I believe, been filmed several times. It originated from the pen of Jules Verne, a demoded writer who had two qualities which are now as rare as the bittern in ornithology or as the scent

of musk in a garden; he had imagination, and he knew how to tell a tale. *Michael Strogoff* has its absurdities, and it does not amount in all to anything more than a boy's thriller. But it has an irresistible momentum in its narration, and the vivid incidents so follow one another that it is quite impossible not to see the thing through to the horror of its climax and the relief of its ending. Away from the cinema, indeed, it can all be easily reduced to something like nonsense. Miss Grahame opens and closes her lovely eyes with an ecstasy of slowness and has no other expression whatsoever, except once when she falls flat on her back in a faint when a dancing bear gets out of hand. Elizabeth Allen is charming and Anton Walbrook has the temerity to act superbly throughout and to take absolutely everything with a burning-eyed seriousness. This last is a grand performance.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

Dance Under the Gallows

(Czecho-Slovakian.)

Palo Bielik.

Once in a long while a great film appears on the international screen, and *Dance Under the Gallows*, by general consent, is such a film. The scene of the story is Slovakia, and its hero is Janoshik, a peasant's son who once lived in the Carpathians and whose name is held in reverence by his countrymen of to-day for the part he played in the struggle of the serfs for liberation from the bondage in which they were held by the nobles. In *Dance Under the Gallows* Janoshik is a dashing Robin Hood, who lives with his band in the mountains and descends into the valleys to take from the nobles what they have taken from the peasants, restoring his booty to the original owners. The outstanding things about the film are the photography and the remarkable performances given in the main parts by unschooled players. Janoshik himself is played by a Slovak *gendarme*, M. Palo Bielik. The climax of the film is the last scene, when Janoshik, standing under the gallows, is granted his last wish—to hear the gypsies play for the last time the song he loves about the lime trees, and to dance to their music. This is a scene of rare dramatic quality; the whole film, indeed, by some method of chance is rare and refreshing. The figure of Janoshik, as played by M. Bielik, is unforgettable; and the Carpathians provide a romantic and lovely background.

—Vienna Correspondent, *The Times*

Mad Girl

(Leo Joannon—French.)

Albert Prejean, Danielle Darrieux.

It would be difficult to find two more sharply differentiated performances than those of Mlle Darrieux in *Mayerling*, and of the same young lady in her present picture, wherein she gives a demonstration of shrill-voiced and prolonged tantrums. I treasure a fond memory of the grave and tender young Countess who offered the solace of her love to the tormented Rudolph, and would fain regard her tempestuous and tardily-tamed shrew as a flash in the pan. The plot of this petulant piece has been devised by Yves Mirande, who is, we are informed, the most successful comedy writer in France. The playwright has been content to rely on an exceedingly slight story, and labours the main situation beyond the limits of its humorous potentialities.

—Michael Orme, *The Sketch*

In the current effort Miss Darrieux races lightly up and down the histrionic keyboard, and flits with ease from passion to disillusion, thence to attempted suicide, and back to passion again, with an air of slightly satiric gaiety which suggests that nothing is really serious when you know it is funny. She is supported in a sophisticated way by Albert Prejean, Andra Roanne, and Lucien Baroux, who nearly steals the film at times, and the English captions rarely annoy. Whether Hollywood can do justice to this wistful and winsome Parisian girl remains to be seen, but remembering the experiences of Lilian Harvey I have qualms amounting to positive doubt.

—Paul Dehn, *The Sunday Referee.*

Critical Summary.

It is sad that the memory of "Mayerling" should have been marred by the sight of Mlle Darrieux in such a very different role. We cannot criticise an actress for wishing to show her versatility, but we could have wished that if a change had to be made it might have been achieved a little less violently.

The Thirteen

(Mikhail Romm—Russian)

Ivan Novoseltsef, Helen Kuzmina, Alexei Tchistyakof, Arsen Fait.

The Thirteen is a dramatic Soviet sketch without the usual emphasis upon the Soviets' message to the world. It is a mere adventure story, an episode laid in the desert wastes of Central Asia, and reminds everyone who see it here of *The Lost Patrol*. I imagine I could list other films and stories it reminded me of, for *The Lost Patrol* itself seemed cast in a familiar pattern. I don't object to that in the least, for it is a good, sound pattern and I expect to see it often. The classic pattern, I might say, though *The Lost Patrol* departed from it, is to include a lady. Men without ladies seldom get lost. Upon the thirteen come the Afghanistan sand-storms, and then, soon enough, up turn the wicked Bashmachi, who are bandits. The resistance of the little troop to these Bashmachi is given with that power characteristic of Russian films. The subterfuges with which the thirteen besieged people foil the large hostile force, the means they take to suggest that they are a greater number than they actually are—such detail conveys to the spectator a sense of real desperation. Careful camera work, soldiers who look like soldiers, and a general expertness make the whole picture an honest and moving rendering of this particular model of crisis and adventure.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

"Yiddle with his Fiddle"

Yiddle with his Fiddle

(Joseph Green—Polish.)

Molly Picon.

Yiddle with his Fiddle was made by a Polish company in Warsaw, and has Yiddish dialogue with superimposed English titles. The prevailing fashions in movie plots have reached Warsaw too, so that we have Miss Molly Picon dressing up as a boy although her features and indeed her outlines are ill-suited to *Transvestismus*: nor are matters improved by her retention throughout the film of a Cupid's bow of lipstick. The hero, as usual, thinks her an awful mollycoddle and treats her rough until she emerges from her improbable chrysalis, when he instantly capitulates. All this takes place against a background of vagrant fiddling and Polish countryside and old Yiddish customs which is fresh and attractive. The picture is full of the ancient and unquenchable vitality of the Jewish race, overflowing into dark, abundant pools of melancholy, lawlessness, vulgarity and beauty.

—Christopher Shaw, *The Spectator*

A film from Poland is a rarity, and the rural and village settings are here not only interesting but also very artistically photographed. An artless story of strolling musicians (not always in synchronisation) has dialogue in Yiddish, with sub-titles in English, tinged with ill-advised American slang. Nothing much happens, but it keeps moving, and there are songs, all in a minor key, which I found slightly monotonous. Molly Picon, already known to Londoners, is a most vivacious screen personality—a sort of Hebraic Binnie Hale, with a fine range of comedy and pathos. She must be seen in another film. Why not star her, say, in *Gold Diggers of* 5698?

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

DON'T LOOK NOW— BUT THERE'S A KNIFE IN YOUR BACK!

Ritzi Nevel, Mexican dancer, fell in love with a knife-thrower in an El Paso night club. They married. At their first joint performance she carried on with her dancing, posing from time to time while sharp-edged knives whistled past her limbs. The first three knives took the audience's breath away. The fourth shaved Ritzi's toe. The fifth took it away altogether.

Ritzi is suing for divorce.

—News Item

Don't fall in love with a knife-thrower, girls,
Let *that* kind of romance go by.
Better far Romeo-less
Than finger- or toe-less,
Better loveless than limbless, says I.
So don't fall in love with a knife-thrower, girls.
Give cutlery-chuckers the gate.
When the party's too quiet
He may be a riot,
But the place for a knife is the plate,
That's straight,
The place for a knife is the plate.

Don't fall in love with a knife-thrower, girls,
Let his glamour not go to your head,
Although he's so charming
He might be disarming
And then begin cutting you dead.
So don't fall in love with a knife-thrower, girls,
It can only mean trouble and strife;
However adoring
A husband gets boring
Who starts cutting chunks off his wife,
Oh, yes,
Even *very* small chunks off his wife.

Sayings

"Anyone can dress as well as I do for about £2,600 a year."

—Kay Francis

"Keep your chin up and your hair waved."

—Myrna Loy

"Ugh! What a fog!"

—Sonja Henie

"I've got the sort of hair that squashes, so I gave up wearing hats."

—Karen Morley

"Now the buttons *are* off the Foyles," as the novelist said after the Literary Luncheon.

"I never miss an opportunity of sitting around or romping with Shirley Temple."

—Trevor Wignall

Il faut souffrir être box-office, Shirley.

"A triumph of miscasting."—Comment on Gable-Loy opus *Parnell* by biographer Joan Haslip.

A little bit out of the Commons

A film was shown for the first time in the House of Commons recently.

Although the film was a documentary, this strikes us as the thin end of the wench, as the producer said when he tripped over Mae West's feet. In future the only questions asked in the House will be in the first house, when one of the back-benchers asks the member in front of him to remove his hat; and conversations such as the following will be everyday occurrences in the lobbies:

1*st Member:* What's on this afternoon, Aubrey?

2*nd Member:* Ooh, the loveliest film, called *Hell Bent for Election*.

1*st Member:* Do let's go! It's bound to be funnier than Mr. Chamberlain.

2*nd Member:* But it's Adults Only, Eric.

1*st Member:* Pooh! If Mr. Maxton can get in, we can.
(As they enter the darkened auditorium, Mr. Anthony Eden comes out of the ninepennies, sucking a toffee.)

2*nd Member:* Don't look now, old boy, but *did* you see how Tony is doing his hair these days?

1*st Member:* You know where he got *that* from. That's the way Ginger Rogers did her hair in that picture last week. The copycat!

2*nd Member:* And I looked in his brief-case yesterday and it was full of *World Film Newses*.

1*st Member: There's* a White Paper for you! (Advt.)

It looks, too, as if the old-fashioned Ugly Scene in the House will die out, to be replaced by a mild murmur of disapproval when Sir Stafford Cripps asks for his own, and everybody else's, money back.

HAIR TO-DAY AND GONE TO-MORROW

According to an American hairdressing expert, some of the most attractive coiffures in the U.S.A. are those of Kay Francis, Miriam Hopkins, Ina Claire, Genevieve Tobin and Mary Boland.

Confident that the British head of hair can hold its own against allcomers, *World Film News* has gotten together a team which will knock any other collection of coiffures you like to mention, for a loop. The team includes: Hannan Swaffer, Godfrey Winn, Elizabeth Bergner, Alfred Drayton, Arthur Dent and a Mrs. Entwistle, *the local charlady, known to her friends as the Bermondsey Medusa.* We saw her let her back hair down last New Year's Eve, and, believe us, that baby's got what it takes. Wish them luck, folks!

FASHION NOTES

Our favourite hysterical daily paper sent a Fashion Expert to take a gander at Sonja Henie as she stepped ashore in this neck of the woods last month. This is how the trained furbelow-fancier summed-up the Henie ensemble:—

Cape: Square-shouldered, in saffron yellow fine wool, lined crêpe-de-chine.

Hat: Felt Flemish bonnet to match, swathed with ginger brown chiffon.

Dress: Saffron crêpe, with ginger brown crêpe-de-chine trimmings.

Shoes: Crêpe-de-chine toeless sandals.

On her shoulder were £5 worth of purple orchids.

After reading this through once or twice to make sure we could believe our eyes, we dusted off our own Fashion Expert, who was lying quietly under the table hemming an old sock, and asked him why the heck he couldn't weigh in with something with a real news-slant like the above. The best he could do, however, was to get an interview with a big film executive in Wardour Street. Here is the *W.F.N.* Fashion Hawk's brilliant analysis of our average movie magnate's outfit:—

Coat: An old hacking-jacket from the Property Department, smothered in gravy-stains.

Hat: A rather fetching brimless bowler, worn off the forehead and swathed in mystery.

Shirt: Away at the races.

Trousers: Away at the seat.

Shoes: A pair of soleless sandals, cleverly made out of old scripts.

In his pocket were £5 worth of dud cheques.

I think I'm going to faint

Girl usherettes at 220 *cinemas throughout Britain are to don gas-masks and learn how to control audiences and prevent panic during air-raids. They will be taught how to dress wounds and protect their patrons from gas.*

—News Item

Looks as if the girls will get plenty of practice without waiting for the first gas-attacks, due any moment now. Any quota quickie is sufficient to induce the symptoms of gas-poisoning in an audience—choking, coughing, running at the eyes, rushing at the exits, and sharp bursts of hollow, mirthless laughter. And as for wounds, the usherettes can always keep their hand in by tending patrons suffering from dislocated jaws brought on by yawning at British bedroom farces; injured pride resulting from Hollywood portrayals of the typical Englishman; and outbreaks of itching fingers brought on by Shirley Temple.

To say nothing of violent attacks of reaching for the hat brought on by the Organ Interlude.

LORUM

Away from it all, or That's what you think

The papers announce a new murder,
The victim was cut up like ham;
A man has been crushed by a girder,
A woman's had twins in a tram.
A financier's leapt from a liner,
A girl has been gassed in a flat,
The state of the City is not very pretty,
Mr. Eden has bought a new hat.

So let us all go to the pictures,
Forgetting such horrors can be;
Yes, let us all go to the pictures,
And what do you think we shall see?

We'll see just the loveliest murders,
All gems of the movie-man's craft,
With marital ructions, attempted seductions,
Extortion and blackmail and graft;
There'll be brawling and shooting and drinking
Our poor sluggish bloodstreams to chill,
And we settle down tightly and lap it up nightly
Even when there's one of those travel pictures with an American commentary in the bill.

LINES TO SOME LADIES

Anna Neagle
Has gone all reagle.

Annabella
Makes a fella
Just a little bit Fonda,
And no wonda.

With Madeleine Carroll,
I have no quarroll.

Carole Lombard
Can be nombard
Among the blondes
With whom I should like to hold hondes.

Kay Francis
Knows all the ancis.

Irene Dunne
Is lots of funne.

Barbara Stanwyck
Is often volcanwyck.

Martha Raye
Is a little *too* gaye.

Vivien Leigh
Is O.K. with meigh.

Than Luise Rainer
There is nobody fainer.

As Others See Us

Recent developments in the B.B.C. autumn television programme include transmissions from film studios. Viewers will be taken through a complete course on how films are made, how scenes are shot, how stars work, what they eat in the restaurant, what the directors look like in action.—News Item.

"Yes, dear, those are the stars having lunch. No, they don't eat very nicely, do they? They're rather out of practice. The director? He's *under* the table."

Songs for the Stars

With Plenty of Muni and You
Arliss, Where Art Thou?
It's a Sin to Tell a Loy.
Mae Little Grey Home in the West.

THOUGHTS FOR TO-DAY

An unnaturally solemn youth
Is Freddie Bartholomewth.

"Not Balalaika-ly," as Eric Maschwitz said when asked if he regretted leaving the B.B.C.

I KISS YOUR LITTLE HAND, MR. KORDA

It is reported that America's women want a more intimate greeting than a handshake.

According to Max Factor, Hollywood make-up expert, the "hand-kiss" is the solution. Real kisses, he says, spoil make-up.

Joan Crawford is said to have described the hand-kiss as a "very beautiful greeting." Marlene Dietrich says: "Charming, if the 'kisser' knows how."

Feeling that this touches only the fringe of the subject, *W.F.N.* sent their Hand-Kiss Editor, a wicked old relic from the Regency days, to try and get one or two of our British film personalities (we gave him a list of all three) to loosen up on the question of this novel form of greeting. His first despatch, which has just reached us from Vine Street, reads as follows:—

Isidore Ostrer: "Ever so nice, but isn't it rude!"

Jeffrey Bernerd: "I am continually having my hand kissed, but never by anybody I know."

Arthur Dent: "It does soil one's gloves so."

Alfred Hitchcock: "I never feel it."

Tommy Farr: "Try kissing mine."

Alexander Korda: "I never allow it. I might get snake-bite."

Snooks Grieser, W.F.N.'s repulsive lift-boy, who tried to kiss Miss Lejeune's hand in a weak moment, is in bed with a broken nose.

" *Now* do you take back what you said about Shirley Temple ? "

A Wide-open Letter to Mr. Gerald Sanger,

Production Chief of British Movietonews.

For the second time, Glen Norris turns the spotlight of candid and constructive criticism on to the British Newsreels. W.F.N. does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed in this article on the newsreel affiliated to the American Twentieth Century-Fox Organisation.

Dear Mr. Producer Sanger,

This letter should really be addressed to your "official" Editor—Sir Malcolm Campbell. I am sure he will understand my reasons for not doing so. His interests cover such a wide field of science, engineering, sport, and journalism, that for him to be just a full-time routine newsreel editor, would be a shameful waste of his valuable talents. I know that he does sometimes edit and commentate Movietonewstories. But I realise that his title as Editor of the general reel is practically nominal. That leaves you as the power behind the Movietone throne.

Gigantic Machine

In your case, "power" is an appropriate word. The newsreel machine upon which you ride is among the world's largest, most efficient. Behind you always, like the slave of Aladdin's lamp, you have the vast organisation of Movietonews of America, which, even allowing for U.S. journalistic exaggeration, is generally regarded as the "giant among the world's newsreels." It swims in the money provided by the enormously successful Twentieth Century-Fox companies. It is the only newsreel that literally covers the world with its own cameramen, speckling the globe like a heat rash. Everywhere outside Britain, you share the service of this tremendous organisation. No matter how obscure the place where a story breaks, you probably have a "staff" man within comparatively short range. In such emergency circumstances, almost any other reel would have to rely on a hastily hired freelance, of doubtful technical ability, with even more doubtful equipment.

Seldom a week passes without some evidence in your reel of the power of your world-wide links in the news camera chain. After more than a year of the Spanish war, when almost every other newsreel has decided that "to forget" is cheaper (for cameramen daily risking their lives, expect to be paid!)—British Movietone continues to bring to the screen weekly proof that its cameras are still turning on all that futile horror. Few other reels can claim to bring so many stories from India and the Far East—except of course Gaumont-British, which shares your foreign material —and a striking feature of some of your recent stories on "Japan versus China," have been the voices of the Chinese and Japanese generals, proving that your sound units even roam the China Seas.

American Influence

Movietonews of America lends you its cameramen—it also largely controls your production policy. In doing so, it has given your reel certain features which I consider to represent the most advanced newsreel technique. A few of them: *You use several commentators—varying the voice to suit the mood of the story.* Properly carried out, I regard that as the best solution to date of the problem of newsreel commentary. *Instead of using separate titles at the start of each story, you print your wording over the first scene, then fade it out.* I believe that system would be even better if the title could first be definitely clearly read against a black background—the picture then fading up behind the title, before the latter disappeared. Thus there would never be the possibility that the picture might distract attention from the title, and there would be a more definite break between stories. But even in its present form, I regard your system as an improvement on that of any other British reel, as bringing a smoother flow to your make-up, a more definite link between title and commentary. *I am enthusiastic about your system of grouping your newstories under such general titles as: Sport, Personalities, Royalty.* It makes for less sudden jumps from the sublime to the silly, from funerals to fireworks. *I admire your frequent use of optical printing tricks—fades, wipes, mixes, one picture superimposed on another.* The modern newsreel has to cram so much into every hundred feet, that many a bad jump, many a loose connection between one picture and the next, cannot be avoided. But they can almost be hidden by a right use of optical printing tricks—while many an idea can be hammered home by a clever trick, which surprises the cinemaudience into a few seconds of absolute concentration.

But perhaps the most important parallel between you and your American namesake, is in the lavishness of your equipment and staff. You send six cameramen out on a story which your rivals might try to cover with two. You have so many sound units, you send them about in pairs. Your pans are always a little bit smoother. Your lenses always seem to bring the great faces just a little bit nearer. Your camera angles, your cloud effects, betray the expert technicians, using the finest tools. Everything about you, even your Main Title, is just a bit bigger and louder than the others.

It sounds grand on paper, doesn't it? You sit at the switch board of a machine that hums with smooth efficiency, that vibrates with controlled power, that is hooked to a world "grid." The machine will do its job superbly, *if the switches are set right!* But in my view, British Movietonews does not do full justice to its machine—and the fault lies in the manipulation of the production controls.

The Voice that Hurts

Commentary is not the most important factor in newsreel production. But any frank discussion of British Movietone's faults, leads automatically to its commentators as a starting point. I have already said that U.S. Movietone has adopted a basic principle of commentating that is perhaps the ideal system. Yours is an exact copy of that system. But inasmuch as it fails completely to understand the American basic principle—by that much, your commentating is the worst fault of British Movietonews.

The American basic principle: that no single voice can cover the full range of human emotions as reported in a newsreel—that therefore there should be a different voice for each type of story—*but that each voice must have its own distinct personality, instantly recognizable from all the others.* Thus U.S. Movietone confounds the critics who say that the cinemaddict likes to get to know one voice. In the U.S., he can still get to know his favourite voice—because no one can fail to differentiate between the slow drama of Lowell Thomas, or the smooth speed of Ed Thorgersen, or the comic sing-song of Lew Lehr.

"Average" British Voices

But on this side of the Atlantic, your voices are all "average" British. Apart from the ladies and the comedians, not one is definitely easily recognizable. Not one has a strongly defined vocal personality. Not one is definitely identified with a certain mood, with drama or tragedy, with heavy plodding or light tripping. At least three of your voices suffer from what the B.B.C. calls the "Oxford Accent"—and badly enough to provoke open jeers in certain parts of the country. A few months ago, I happened to see your Boat Race story in a tiny Lancashire village hall. The event of the evening was the derisive roar that greeted your commentator's: "Ah expect you reahlahs that ahm an Oxford man mahself." Perhaps not quite so bad as that spelling looks—but nearly! At least two of your voices imagine that to convey excitement they must shout—and one forces his voice up to such a strained high pitch, that I once heard him described in the row behind me as "the voice that hurts."

I am convinced, that to a large number of cinemagoers, your commentaries are bad enough actually to *detract* from the interest of fine photography. That does not prevent me from believing that the U.S. Movietone multi-voice idea is the nearest I know to the newsreel ideal. But as for your interpretation of it, I vote for a new-deal!

NEWSREEL RUSHES

(A Wide-open Letter.....continued)

Lack of Unified Control

Not only your voices, but the stories they have to tell, are mostly dull. The ideas they try to express are generally obscured by vocal padding. The jokes they try to put over are often forced and foolish. The reason: although you are far ahead in other ways, you still stick to the old fashioned system of writing commentaries to fit previously cut pictures. You still try to tell the story on the screen, then add a vocal accompaniment on the sound track. No wonder your stories hobble along, to the rhythm of Laurel and Hardy's signature tune. Modern American technique is almost the complete reverse of your system. They tell the story in a fast moving commentary, illustrate it with exciting shots. Every foot of film, every word of commentary, that doesn't pull its full weight, is ruthlessly cut, Hence the breathless speed, which is so obviously lacking in your reel. I feel that the first step towards achieving it, in your case, would be a more unified control over the various production departments. At present, there seem to be so many different men sticking a finger in the make-up pie—certain items edited by yourself, others by Sir Malcolm Campbell, yet others by executive boss Tommy Scales—script-writers hurriedly viewing pictures, to write rush commentaries that fit by accident more than by design—commentators reading material that they have hardly had time to assimilate—news editor Ivan Scott tearing from his executive desk, to speak commentaries, while his mind wrestles with some big outside problem. All these, and others, combine badly enough to give to your finished reel a patchwork effect that prevents it from taking its place among the world's best.

One Man

My remedy: a place in your organisation for one man, who would combine something of the work of a chief cutter, and a script-writer. One man, who, as each story was passed to him for make-up, would visualise ahead its new value, the best method of presentation, the type of commentating voice for that presentation. Who would then write a commentary in the best style for the available voice, would cut the picture in such a way that not a shot is included that could not be better left to a vocal description, not a word spoken over a shot strong enough to tell its own story. You may already have such a man in your organisation, you may have to go out and find him. But when you do, and give him the freedom and power he will need for his work of unification, I foresee a transformation in the audience impact of British Movietonews. I see now a reel that has tremendous possibilities, because of its almost unique newsgathering power. It only requires a reform in a somewhat inefficient production policy, to turn that power loose on the screen, with possibly surprising results.

Sincerely yours,

GLEN NORRIS

NEWSREEL NOTES

BY THE COMMENTATOR

TIME and again the world's newspapers have demonstrated their power to wield the battle-axe of public opinion—to set millions clamouring for some obscure political reform, screaming against some once popular figure. Through the years the press has built up a tradition of ever growing effectiveness as a mould of public opinion; a tradition of which the newsreels may well be envious.

1937 may well go down as the year when, for the first time, a newsreel started a national wave of indignation; was used by a government department as its star witness in an important political issue. The reel: U.S. Paramount News. The government department: The U.S. Committee on Civil Liberties. The issue: The Chicago riot between police and labour, in which the final score was: 10 dead, 40 wounded by bullets, 60 beaten.

When Paramount cameraman Orlando Lippert hung around outside Chicago's Republic Steel Works instead of joining his rivals at the Indianapolis car races, he secured some of the most harrowing pictures ever taken of a police *v.* labour battle that turned into a massacre. (See *W.F.N.* for August.) The pictures were at once confiscated by the Civil Liberties Committee, commissioned to investigate charges of police brutality, said to be conclusively proved by the Paramount shots. A few days later a few of the less bloody scenes were shown in this country by British Paramount. Meanwhile America shouted to be shown the film, talked of little else.

At the Committee hearing, through days of stinging anti-police testimony, a huge screen and projector in the Senate room showed that the newsreel was to be the final climax. At last the room was darkened—700 faces strained forward. The complete film was shown at normal speed—the worst scenes repeated at half speed—with now and then a stop, to let a telling close-up sink in.

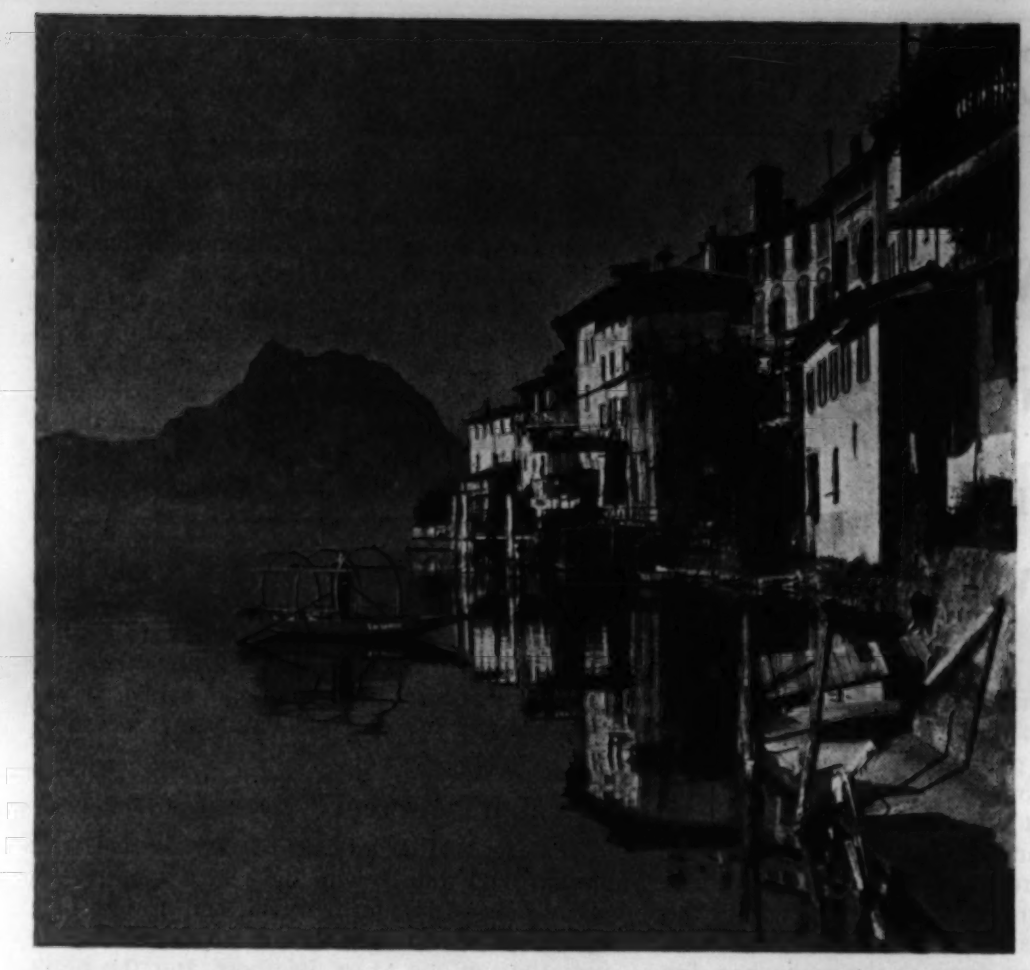
Finally the Committee came to the conclusion that the film *did not prove* that the police had fired without provocation, but *did prove* that the provocation had not justified the extreme brutality used, *i.e.*, that tear gas would have served as effectively as guns and clubs. Also concluded the Committee, taking its cue largely from the film: "Treatment of the injured was characterised by the most callous indifference to human life and suffering. Wounded prisoners of war might have expected and received greater solicitude."

As soon as the Committee had seen the film, it was released to the clamouring cinemas, Paramount explaining that the national indignation had now cooled. That they were only partly right, was daily proved by the hisses, boos, and shouts, that almost everywhere greeted the close-ups of the dead, dying and wounded. The film was at once banned in Chicago by a far from remorseful officialdom, which was preparing to prosecute 65 bystanders and others who were arrested during the riot. Chicago's Mayor announced that an "unbiased jury of local citizens" had just found *for* the police, with a verdict of "justifiable homicide." On press enquiry, the jury was found to be composed of unemployed members of The American Legion. But it was neither this report, nor any other, that had really aroused the American public. It was the *sight* and *sound* of the Paramount newsreel.

Marxian Newsreel!

The fact that a film called *A Day at the Races* should deal mostly with days in a sanatorium, an evening at a water carnival, and a night in a bedroom, is just another tribute to the madcap versatility of the Marx Brothers. But the film's craziest of climaxes is finally set round a racecourse. To build up a suitable four-legged atmosphere, to put across the idea that tens of thousands are waiting for the big race, to kid us that this is a real-life meeting and no studio set, is the problem solved by M.G.M. in masterly fashion. In roughly 100 feet of film there flashes on to the screen a series of brilliantly angled close-ups, of crowded stands, of tipsters, of jockeys, of everyone and everything, each shot mixing into the next, *but not one longer than three or four feet*. Meanwhile a brassy band plays a fast stepping march. There is little or no attempt to use synchronised sound. The total effect of this quite short sequence is extraordinary. It takes the cinemaddict right out of his seat, and into the picture. After seeing it, he waits for the Marxian antics, and no amount of far-fetched fooling can detract from the reality of that racecourse.

Here surely is a lesson to the newsreels. Points for their note-books: (1) An enormous number of different angles gives the impression of vivid detail to the scene. (2) Short shots hold the interest, and prevent that "I wonder how they took this" feeling. (3) Interesting angles, and a carefully worked out sequence of shots, *can be completely* successful in building up atmosphere, even in a newsreel length. (4) Strong, rhythmic music completes the illusion, does not need much help from "general" sound. (5) It is quite hopeless to expect to be able to make up such a sequence from the haphazard shooting of, say, half a dozen cameramen at the Derby. The only way is to shoot to a minutely worked out script—or to treat the pre-race build-up as a library story, using the best shots of the last ten years and adding a few more shots to the pool each year. So why doesn't some reel start preparing a sequence now, to be tacked on to the front of next year's Grand National? If it were edited as well as the Marxian newsreel, there'd be sensation in Wardour Street!



GLAMOROUS

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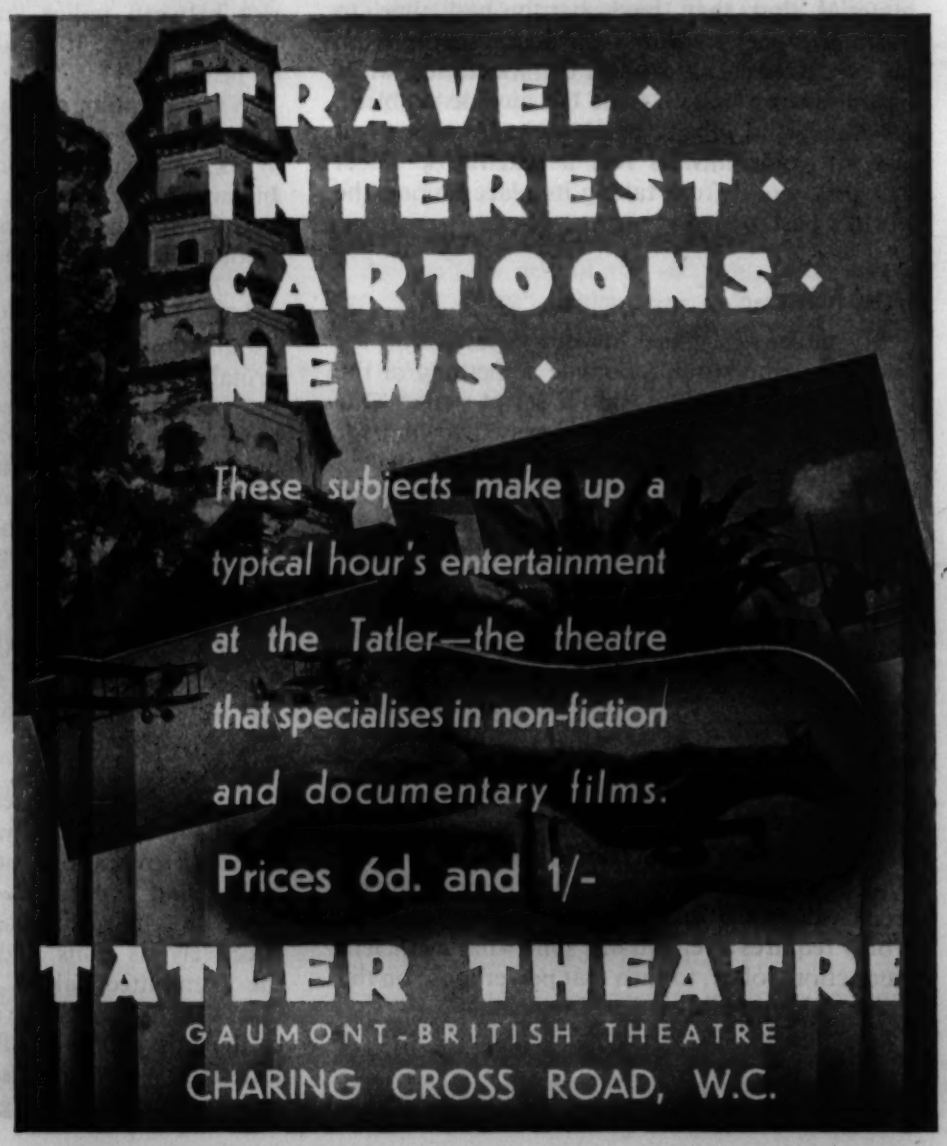

LETTERS

Pabst Pipe Dream

Your article "Pipe Dreams of London and Hollywood" reminds me of a film which G. W. Pabst wanted to make for Paramount.

The action of the story takes place on cruise, when people of all nationalities are on board the same ship, dancing, playing, dining together. News comes by wireless: war has started in Europe. The passengers on board divide into groups—into their respective countries. Hatred for their enemies—who five minutes ago were their friends—boils in their blood. There is shouting and fighting, anger and bitterness. Even a married couple, husband from one country, wife from another, quarrel and part. . . . an orphan boy with Italian father and Austrian mother is neglected and despised. Then word comes that the alarm had been false, that the ship's wireless operator, shell-shocked during the war, has a nervous obsession . . . he was repeating what he had heard so often. "Thousands dead . . . thousands dead."

The subsequent shame and humiliation of the passengers was the moral of the film.

This story was too pacificatory for Mr. Hayes. Pabst shot *A Modern Hero* instead. Just another pipe dream. . . .

LOTTE EISNER

Music-Hall and Melodrama

Mr. John Grierson is right to point to the music-hall as British films' only contact with the "common people across the footlights." But he might have added a word for another part of our show-world which has its roots as deeply as the music-hall. I refer to the Melodrama.

To critics the stage always was and is the West End, and 'Maria Marten' melodrama something to laugh at or to ignore. There was something ignoble in the guying of melodrama in the West End a few years ago when Mr. Tod Slaughter and his Company were taken from the doomed Elephant and Castle, where they had for years thrilled and entertained real people, to be the mock and amuse of the West End sophisticates.

Hundreds of thousands of people had laughed and cried over these old plays, had laughed and cheered, had been terrified and thrilled, as they have never been by modern plays. These plays were real enough to evoke storms of boos and cheers: even to make playing the villain an uncomfortable business—I know of a case many years ago where the man playing a particularly villainous role in one town was unable to walk the streets in safety.

Modern drama, particularly modern propagandist drama, has never re-captured this power over the audience. The movies did in their early days—again partly through the use of the melodrama and melodramatic methods—and even now make their strongest impression through gangster pictures. Mr. George Arliss, I am convinced, owes his popularity to the fact that he is essentially the creature of melodrama, almost the last of a long and honoured line. And can he pack them in!

Hitchcock owes his success to the fact that he tries to make melodramas. But he has never really moved and thrilled people, not in the way that the old melodramas did, for example. Hitchcock had to use the tricks of the movies to keep the attention of his audience. His is West End stuff, it is sophisticated. West End accent, West End posturing and mincing, West End la-de-da talk and thinking and underacting—these have ruined the theatre and are well on the way to ruining the British cinema as well. Hitchcock is stuffed full of this and his thrillers cry aloud—"this is absurd, really, it's to laugh at," and melodrama cannot be made by sophisticated chuckles.

British films will never touch greatness until they learn to be of the audience, as were the music-halls and the melodramas. You cannot make a film native to this country by adding a few shots of sheep grazing on a hill, or by hiring a few real workmen for an hour in the studios. Great drama is of the crowd, built out of the emotions, living and speech of the crowd.

CHARLES WHARTON

Can Films help the Appreciation of Poetry?

It has been suggested that Keats's "Ode to Autumn," and particularly the second stanza, might be most effectively explained by a series of pictorial images in a classroom film of the poem. What a situation is contemplated! All over England boys and girls will have thrust upon them an authoritative, standardised set of harvest scenes which they must accept as being "what the poet saw". To quote the author of the article referred to: "The whole poem is a series of mental images, and it is important that the pupil should himself have in his own mind the images the poet had in his when the verses were written."

The mass-produced "explanation" in the poetry lesson will indeed be a new portent. A poem is not a blue print with one exact precise meaning about which there can be no two opinions; it may, on the contrary, bear several interpretations, in which case it is not for any teacher—or film producer—to foist his interpretation upon every child within range. The teacher should foster wealth and variety of interpretation rather than precise uniformity.

Moreover, Keats's poem suggests not only visual images, but also, for example, such sensations as that of drowsiness on a warm Autumn afternoon, and these can as well be suggested by words as by pictures that give only the outward behaviour of someone experiencing those feelings. In fact, the filming of a poem is almost certain to encourage an undue emphasis on one element of the poem—its pictorial content. What of the rhythm, rhyme, vowel melody, onomatopoeia—all those elements that are essentially verbal? It may be replied that the teacher need not give up the whole of the time to the film; but he will certainly find it difficult to resist the temptation and to preserve a proper balance in his lesson.

And there still remains the problem of the exact place at which the film should come in. If it is shown at the beginning, the audience will see the pictures first and only gradually, at later viewings, become aware of the poem itself, which they will then try to link up with the pictures. That will be making the poem a commentary upon the film, instead of the reverse. The *poem* is the thing, and it becomes really part of our experience only if, by effort, we try to take the poet's meaning direct from his own words. The only possible place for a film would be at the end of the usual lesson when the class, having already attempted to appreciate the poem, might as a matter of interest, compare their own impressions with those of the film.

W. E. JARRETT, M.A.

Amsterdamit

Boys do it; girls do it. Ivens did it several times. Storck almost does it. You know what *it* is of course. *It* is the Amsterdam (or Rotterdam or Dontgiveadam) film which trickles out of Holland into the Film Society programmes, year in, year out. It is the spice of the Film Society programme. You see it four Sundays out of five. It always gets applause. It is quaint. It is human. It is TRUE.

Those narrow quaint streets with people in them. Those so quaint peaky roofs, those daringly modern factories. And then lots and lots of people on bicycles. And canals and barges. And that windmill on the outskirts of the town. And those funny workers (so different from you and me, poor things), who hang out washing. And those funny trams.

Then there is the man playing the concertina. And a girl looking at a boy on a seat. And just a teeny hint of two sailors dancing together.

And then the camera shakes a bit. And it dashes up and down towers. Then, flick, flick, and there's a picture by Van Dyck, but not long enough to see it properly (sometimes you only see the frame).

Then it rains. Tiddle, tiddle go the raindrops in the puddles. The Dutch—the funnies—put up umbrellas. And those women in those delicious old costumes take arms and run for shelter.

And now for the great moment. The peak. The crux. The nadir. Do you know it? Can you guess? It's that newspaper floating by in a puddle. Ah, life is very sad. We are all pieces of paper, drifting by on life's stream. That is *The Amsterdam Film.*

The truth has now been horribly brought home to me. I have taken an hour's walk in the fine and dignified city of Amsterdam. Just a tripper's walk with an hour to spare between appointments. I have seen the raw material of *The Amsterdam Film.* And a horrid deception has been unmasked. *The Amsterdam Film* is just a tripper's film. It could have been made by you, me, or the next man, whether we knew the language or not, after a morning's preparation with a guide book.

The Dutch documentary directors acting, no doubt, with every pretension of sensibility and snootiness, have a tripper's view of their own beautiful country, beautiful not because of its quaint heirlooms, but because of a living, pulsating, modern life against an architectural background which has been tactfully absorbed into the twentieth century.

Amsterdamit, let us one day see the real Holland on the screen.

ARTHUR ELTON

RADIO

American Radio Commentary

THE AUTHOR OF THIS ARTICLE, THOMAS BAIRD, HAS JUST RETURNED FROM THE U.S.A., WHERE FOR SIX MONTHS HE HAS STUDIED FILM AND RADIO. THIS ARTICLE WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A SERIES DEALING WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF AMERICAN FILM AND RADIO.

Even a cursory glance at American radio throws up fundamental differences from English policy and technique. Some of these are directly traceable to the sponsorship basis of the United States system. American radio has money. It can pay for talent, it can pay for producers, it can afford experiments on a scale denied to the B.B.C. On the other hand, it must serve the majority audience most of the time. When you are selling 10-cent tooth-paste, you cannot afford to talk to a few; you must get the millions. United States Broadcasting therefore plays the Hollywood game. Entertainment of the best and brightest nature fills the most important listening hours. Statistics show the twelve most popular items to be variety turns. The Jack Bennies, the Gracie Allens, the Eddie Cantors and the like get the popular vote. Talks, in the popular estimation, are far down the list. The first talk holds about thirtieth place; *March of Time* about fiftieth.

* * * *

America wants fun on the radio and she gets it. She also wants music, and she gets it. Plenty! Sunday in New York has more good music than the B.B.C. provides in the week. America finds the day to day world interesting and there is a steady demand for news—not merely news bulletins, but editorial treatment of the news. Daily, a series of commentators discuss the news of the world. It is more than reporting; it is public discussion; it is criticism. Out of this has arisen the journalistic race to chase the topical event. Commentators pray that the catastrophe will occur ten minutes before they come on the air.

* * * *

This demand for topicality and for the informed comment on the news brings the commentator into actual contact with the news as it is being made. H. V. Kaltenborn, radio news commentator, gave his impressions of a tour through rebel Spain, in a broadcast from Paris, over the Columbia net-work. Last year he made the first broadcast of the actual course of a battle when he took his microphone across the French border and brought to America the eye-witness' account of the fighting between the Spaniards. The detonation of exploding shells added a dramatically real touch to the broadcast.

During the devastating floods at the beginning of this year the radio commentators kept an anxious public informed of events in the stricken area, as well as moving in to direct much of the rescue work. Occasionally, the journalist's sixth sense takes a man to the right place at the right time, as it took one N.B.C. commentator to Lakehurst the day the Hindenburg exploded. The cosy atmosphere of thousands of American drawing-rooms was that day chilled by the description of the scene as the burning ship crashed to the ground.

* * * *

The free discussion of politics on the air leads to some anomalous situations. While the B.B.C. kept their dignified silence on the abdication, British journalists and statesmen sat in London and discussed the situation with the American public over U.S. networks.

* * * *

Unlike the B.B.C., the United States companies plan topical programmes from day to day. This flexibility is carried as far as scrapping an advertised concert or a play on short notice, so that a topical event can be brought to listeners. A few hours after Marconi died, American companies were paying tribute in memorial programmes, which dramatised the life of the man who made radio practical reality. *The March of Time* is the high light of this type of topicality. Vivid treatment of the news of the week, with re-enacted episodes, is a sound contribution to America's criticism of things as they happen. Historical perspective, dramatisation and actuality, focus attention on the growing points of America's life.

* * * *

So important has this dramatic technique become that *Columbia Broadcasting System* has set aside a department to study and experiment with new sound techniques. This department, the *Columbia Work-Shop*, directed by Irving Reis, is contributing the most outstanding research in the radio's dramatic possibilities. Reis, once a radio engineer, adds to a deep working knowledge of radio technique an intelligent sense of drama. Most of his work exploits the peculiar qualities of the radio medium. Every week he presents programmes which experiment with radio drama as a new technique. His programmes have included adaptations of short stories, original plays, instructive interpretations of the nature of radio, dramatic news, history and Shakespearean adaptations—every one significant, not so much for the content as for their experimental radio approach. His work has repaid his labour and the freedom which *Columbia* has allowed him, for much of his technique is passing into the day to day programmes. His technical knowledge has given him the advantage of being able to plan his effects in terms of the very stuff of radio.

* * * *

One of Reis' outstanding feature programmes this Spring was the production of an original verse play written by Archibald McLeish, one of America's best known contemporary poets.

McLeish has now turned his hand to the radio adaptation of Shakespeare. In an interview he compares his task to that of "digging a great structure out of the rubbish of a lesser city built above it, and seeing at last the pure and noble contours of the old walls." His attitude is an interesting one even to us well-accustomed to the Shakespearean productions of the B.B.C. It is calculated that an American audience is not prepared to listen to a two-hour broadcast. McLeish is facing this situation by adaptation. He explains his procedure and ideal thus: "*Lear* is, of course, the worst of the tragedies so far as plot is concerned, if the greatest for pure poetry. It has as many sub-plots as the most entangled of the comedies. What I have tried to do is to free the drama of *Lear* from all the other twists of the thread, letting the Narrator tell whatever is necessary to know of Edmund's loves and Gloucester's miseries. The result is the loss of one great passage (the scene at the cliff). But unless I am wildly wrong this loss is more than repaired and over-balanced by the gain in consecutiveness of the tragedy of Lear himself.

"But it is not only for this reason that I have been excited by the work," McLeish continued. "I have tried very hard to make of this version something more than an adaptation for radio. I have tried to make of it a radio play. I believe that radio is peculiarly fitted to carry great works of imagination of which *Lear* is surely one of the greatest. I have therefore attempted throughout to give those suggestions of sound which will enable the imaginations of hearers to fill in the background of the scenes.

"These suggestions, moreover, I have attempted to use in such a way as to hold the whole play together in its present cut form, creating a kind of matrix of imagined background against which the scenes of the action may take their places. Above all, I have tried to give the Narrator's voice a background of sound so that the hearer will never feel that the action has stopped but rather that the action continues in the background while the Narrator speaks. In this way the Narrator may become part of the play instead of an interruption to it."

RADIO

Notes of the Month

by George Audit

THERE is no excuse for flat programmes even in holiday times. Only a minority of the eight million listeners are away on leave at any given time during the summer and there must be quite a few millions of poor and unemployed folk who get no holiday at all. Therefore, during this period when small houses are often unbearably hot and counter-attractions are at a low ebb one might reasonably expect to hear brighter programmes.

What changes do the B.B.C. make for their summer output. Sunday programmes are practically unaltered. There are no big series of talks. There are more light (and less expensive) orchestral programmes. Feature programmes, plays, and star variety shows are suspended.

Programme expenditure is lowest in the summer months. The nightly relay of Promenade concerts through August and September is a blessed release for programme builders.

Now I believe that this policy is based on an entire misconception. The B.B.C. assumes that most people are away or out-of-doors in summer. There are obviously fewer listeners during these months but those who remain do not spend all their evenings walking around the streets and are not so contented that they can dispense with the entertainment for which they have paid.

The following analysis of the composition of Sunday programmes for July is interesting.

11 broadcasting hours are made up of:—

2¾ hours of religious items;
3¾ hours of classical and chamber music;
3¼ hours of light music;
1 hour of talks.

Nobody objects to church services being broadcast for those who want them and there is probably just about the right amount of classical music, but where is the alternative "lighter" programme of which we have heard so much. Taking Sunday, July 18th, as fairly representative you find that two religious services lasting 1¾ hours altogether were broadcast in both programmes simultaneously. To the six items of heavy music there were the following alternatives:

(1) none; (2) none; (3) a quintet; (4) talk and a band; (5) talk; (6) light music.

Only items 4 and 6 can be called alternative programmes.

The best broadcast variety this summer has been entirely arranged and produced by someone outside the B.B.C. I have in mind the series of Radio Rodeos, presented by that versatile organist, Harold Ramsay. Quite a feat in these programmes has been regular performances on the cinema organ by leading players which have succeeded in pleasing without blowing your eardrums in or giving you the quivers in the stomach. Harold Ramsey has sustained such a high level of comedy (judged by ordinary broadcasting standards) that I should say he could dispense with his setting "Under the Texas evening sky, at home on the range," which has nothing to do with the comedy anyway, and I have always imagined a Texas ranch as rather a hot place in August.

There were eleven relays of concert parties from seaside resorts during the past season. The idea was a good one and two of the few I heard were quite entertaining. Unfortunately each party put on a special show for the broadcast which made it indistinguishable from a studio concert, so that any impression of being beside the seaside was lost. For the benefit of those of us who sweat in towns I should like to hear something more characteristic of the seaside. Strolling minstrels, funfairs, beach games, fortune tellers, and the sounds of the water could surely be woven into a pattern that would call up pleasant memories of past holidays.

* * *

As a clearing house for news and information the B.B.C. carries a heavy responsibility. This summer foreign news has taken a permanent seat on the front page of all balanced newspapers. Events in Spain, China, America and Russia have sent newshawks scuttling round the world and back to satisfy the enormous public appetite for "the truth behind the headlines." News films galore have come from the front lines. Confused by partisan exaggerations the public has turned to the B.B.C. for information, for the truth about what is going on over the horizon.

The B.B.C.'s response to that appeal has been scandalous. They have sent no observers to Spain or China. They have broadcast nothing from the scenes of action. Except for a local talk to Welsh listeners by D. R. Grenfell the other day, there have been no eye witness accounts. There has been only the bare recital of claims and counter-claims occupying a few minutes of the news bulletin. Occasionally a home observer is called into the studio to give his impressions, as was Sir Bernard Pares on the Russian trials.

The B.B.C. will give you a first-hand impression of a Tattoo or air manœuvres but they will not deliver any direct information on political events. They prefer agency reports because they thus escape responsibility for what they say. Imagine the *March of Time* presenting a picture of some aspect of life in England by means of interviews with Press Association officials. That is what the B.B.C. is doing. A tape machine is exciting in comparison.

BOOK REVIEWS

Soviet Arts

"In Western Europe and North America film art has not been able to keep pace with technical progress. In the Soviet Union the exact opposite was the case. Mind made a mock of the machine. The first world successes of the Soviet Films were produced under such primitive conditions that it seems almost a miracle when we look at the results."

So writes Kurt London (*Seven Soviet Arts*, Faber and Faber, 15*s*.), an admirer of the early works of the three great creators of the artistic film in the U.S.S.R., Pudovkin, Eisenstein and Dovshenko.

Changing conditions and opinions in Russia have pushed these three into the background, according to London. He fears that the great period of Soviet Films is ended.

The newer films have "lost the characteristic impress" which marked the earlier works, are not much more than "diluted editions of earlier standard works, or even bad imitations of Western types."

Describing himself as "one of that almost extinct race of men who stand with one foot in the century of liberalism," Kurt London surveys Soviet Art—Music, Literature, Theatre, Opera, the Ballet, Architecture, Radio and Film—and, though unhappy about the compulsory enforcement of the ideology of the ruling group on all forms of artistic expression, has nothing but praise for the cultural achievements of the Soviet Union in general.

"A judgment on the Soviet Union without knowledge of the cultural activities of the country must be incomplete or even erroneous. . . . For our Western culture, which prides itself so much on its high level, should at least learn from the Soviets what organisation can do to make art available to the people."

Kurt London's book should help many more to learn of the work and achievements of the Soviet Union in bringing literacy and a wider culture to the masses.

C.

Indispensable Reference Book

Among the many useful features in this year's issue of *The Motion Picture Almanac* is the Who's Who, occupying 845 pages out of the Almanac's 1,342, and containing over thirteen thousand biographies. Other sections include a chronology of the motion picture, details of the financial structure of the industry, of distribution, exhibition and production organisations, a survey of the British and foreign film markets, a radio Who's Who, a complete list of all sound films made up to 1937, and details of the screen press and other organisations.

The special feature of the Almanac is its international character, and it probably provides the most comprehensive information on world film developments, film personnel and business structure, that is obtainable within one cover.

Here is five pounds, six ounces of useful facts for one pound. *The Motion Picture Almanac* is edited by Terry Ramsaye and published by Quigley Publications.

PEOPLE WITH PURPOSES

NEWS NOTES

Mr. James Arthur Rank, leader of the Religious Film Society, Mr. John Grierson of Film Centre, and Mr. Bruce Woolfe, are collaborating to make religious feature films for the church. First production is to be Tolstoi's *Where Love Is.*

The Cinema Christian Council is endeavouring to stimulate interest in the production and projection of religious films, and to encourage churches to regard films as a necessity. The Religious Film Society, working in close association with the Cinema Christian Council, has offered a large number of G.B. projectors to the churches on special terms, and is preparing a series of 26 religious film services—one being available each week for evangelistic work throughout the autumn and winter season. It is also establishing a depôt and studio at Ranger Road, Norwood, where an old cinema is being equipped for all branches of film production.

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For two and a half years Gaumont-British Instructional film units, headed by Mary Field, Paul Rotha, Donald Carter and Jack Holmes, have been filming in Scotland. Fifteen two-reel subjects have been made from 150,000 feet of film, and will shortly be released to schools, universities and the general public.

Scottish Regional Geography, which is the title of the series, will be followed by *West Indies*, now in the cutting room. The next survey will be of Yorkshire, and in due course G.B.I. hope to film the whole Empire.

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Mr. John G. Bridges, in charge of a party of the Overseas League who recently visited Scotland, is taking back to Canada several thousand feet of film depicting the scenic beauties of the country, with a view to inducing Canadians to come to Scotland for the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow next year. The films are to be screened in Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto.

* * *

A series of reports made by educational inspectors in Scotland indicate that the main advance in the use of films in schools has been in the leading cities, but high hopes are held for a more extensive use in the future.

Branches of the Educational Film Association in Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire have been enthusiastically supported, activities including instruction in the use of projectors, demonstrations of new films, and formation of study circles to criticise existing films and to discuss methods of presentation.

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There is every likelihood that all schools in Perth will have a "film hour" included in their timetable. Efforts have also been made in other parts of Scotland to institute the practice, and in one place the local savings bank has given £1,500 towards defraying the cost of projectors.

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Rev. Merricks Arnott of Aberdeen has filmed children of the Church of Scotland in a parable play *A Pearl of Great Price*. The picture was shot in colour on the sands.

The question of the benefit obtained by mental defectives from films was recently discussed by the Kent Public Assistance Committee. It was pointed out that during the long winter evenings it was difficult to entertain the patients, and that the cinema was a great help towards recovery. Other members argued that when watching a film the patients' minds were carried into forgetfulness, when they should be brought to actuality.

A resolution was passed giving power to the Maidstone Guardians Committee to provide six cinema entertainments during the winter months.

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A cinema projector with deaf-aid headphones has been presented to the Margate Royal School for the deaf and dumb.

Future plans for improving the Swain Street Institution in Leicester include the installation of a cinema.

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'Maryllia' cosmetics are showing colour films in their hairdressing and beauty salons. Clients receiving treatment will be able to see films showing correct make-up methods and the manufacture of cosmetics. Projectors and films will be lent to stockists and big London stores.

* * *

During the last few years there has been an increasing demand for lectures and film shows dealing with the social, æsthetic, and educational aspects of the Cinema. The need for co-ordinating and developing this important field has been recognised by Associated Realist Film Producers. This body, a non-profit-making group representative of documentary film makers, has set up a Lecture Committee which announces that a Panel of Lecturers has been formed, the names of which include: Edgar Anstey, Thomas Baird, Andrew Buchanan, Oliver Bell, Ritchie Calder, Alberto Cavalcanti, Elsie Cohen, Richard de Rochemont, Arthur Elton, William Farr, Russell Ferguson, John Grierson, Forsyth Hardy, Stanley Hawes, J. B. Holmes, Julian Huxley, Alfred Junge, F. C. Klingender, Stuart Legg, Marjorie Locket, Victor Peers, Paul Rotha, George H. Sewell, Alexander Shaw, Evelyn Spice, John Taylor, Basil Ward, Harry Watt, Norman Wilson, and Basil Wright.

In September the Committee will issue a syllabus of lectures and film shows available at suitable fees to societies, institutes, schools, and other bodies interested in the cinema. The subjects will cover every aspect of the theory and practice of the documentary, educational and fiction film. Application for this syllabus or for individual lectures should be made to the Secretary, A.R.F.P., 33 Soho Square, London, W.1.

'TO-DAY WE LIVE'

(A Strand Film, produced by Paul Rotha, directed by R. I. Grierson and Ralph Bond).

This film has something which the documentary directors have been accused—sometimes unjustifiably—of missing: the real human touch. It also has a sincerity that is all the more telling in that it is backed by extremely efficient technical work. Sponsored by the National Council of Social Service, its aim is to show how the work of the Council brings new life to a village, in the form of a community hall, and to a depressed area in Wales, in the form of a centre where men can meet and work on various crafts and improve their cultural knowledge. All the parts are taken by the actual inhabitants, and it says much for the production values that their acting knocks spots off a good many professionals one could mention.

But the real values of *To-day We Live* are twofold. Firstly, it presents English people, in their own surroundings and their own form of life, exactly as they are—one hesitates to add "with sympathy and understanding" for the sincerity of the film passes beyond that type of patronage. Secondly, it makes no bones about the facts, and presents the work of the N.C.S.S. as a palliative (and a very necessary one) rather than as a solution to a problem of the first magnitude. From the point of view of the sponsors themselves this adds immensely to the force of the message the film conveys.

In a film where every shot is full of the details of ordinary life it is difficult to pick out individual sequences, but there is one, showing the unemployed gathering coal from the slag heaps, with a high wind blowing men and dust across the frame, which is about as sensational a piece of shooting and cutting as has been seen for some time. It achieves at the same time an atmosphere of fierce despair which adds to the general emotional effect which signals the whole of this film as a really human document. And if any exhibitor thinks it's not "box-office," he's ten-to-one making a fairly big mistake.

C.M.

People with Purposes

MAKING 'TO-DAY WE LIVE'

It was to the Rhondda Valley that our Unit travelled. The fame of the Rhondda miners is world-wide. They live in villages plunged deep in the valleys, brick and stone houses scattered with no thought of plan round the pits and slag heaps, a monumental indictment of the ruthlessness of early mining capitalism.

To-day most of them are without work. In 1920 49,000 were working; to-day less than 20,000. Pits everywhere are standing idle. The only contacts the miners have with coal are the slag heaps where sometimes they are permitted at ever present risk to life and limb, to scramble for enough to keep the fires burning in their homes.

On the Slag Heaps. **Strand Film**

Against this background we shot our sequences for *To-day We Live*, and no film unit could have had more willing co-operation and friendship. Our headquarters were at Pentre in the Big Rhondda, a mining village with most of its population out of work. We explained to them the film we wanted to make and once they understood that we were there for a serious purpose, we had no further difficulties.

Our script called for three chief characters—unemployed miners who with their colleagues were building an occupational centre with funds put up by the National Council of Social Services.

We picked our three men and for several evenings discussed the script in detail with them. Their advice and proposals were of the utmost value and in most cases their suggestions were incorporated in the script.

The result was that when shooting began our characters understood the script as well as we did ourselves, and this, combined with the traditional dramatic sense of the Welsh, made retakes—excepting only one or two especially difficult scenes—a rare occurrence.

Our locations were the streets of Pentre and Treorchy, the hut the men were building at the edge of a coal-dirtied river, and the slag heaps of Cymmer and Tylorstown.

We hope that we have succeeded in infusing into the film some of the warm human friendliness of the Rhondda men and women. We made many friends and came away hoping that one day we can go back to make another film that will afford perhaps greater opportunities for recording the lives of some of the grandest people in the world.

RALPH BOND.

I SHOT IN PERSIA

By John Taylor

IRAN is not an easy country to shoot in even at the best of times. It has a range of temperatures between 130 above and 40 below zero. In the south you might be wearing a snappy line in summer suiting. Two hundred miles north nothing short of a bear skin and a gill of rum will give you any comfort.

The railway construction road up to the plateau runs through fearsome ravines, on one side a wall of rock, on the other a straight drop into a large river four thousand feet below. As the car zig-zags along through a foot of snow the driver lights a cigarette with one hand, looks up, skids around a sharp corner and tells you casually that the only thing that was found of the bus and thirty people that went over here last week was the driver's hat. And so you plug on toward Teheran.

The temperature falls to thirty below, the radiator freezes up as the car runs. Ice forms on the inside of the windows and the driver chisels it off with a screwdriver as he drives. In the end he runs into a snow bank and spends an hour chipping the packed snow under the car with the screwdriver.

At the next town, when the snow has got to a depth of four feet, he buys a spade and some chains but he doesn't think they are really necessary. "What's four feet of snow or a skid and a four thousand foot drop? What the hell are these blasted photographers worrying about anyway?" The next fifteen miles takes three full days. The snow blows in drifts across the road, and then freezes. The driver goes on over the snow dunes until a dome top collapses and the car goes in up to the windows. The driver climbs out of his window, walks round and clears yours, hauls you out, and the digging starts again. On the third day you come to a town. The rooms open straight into the courtyard and before the evening meal you have an appetiser of gherkins and vodka. The dining-room is full of Italian, German and Swedish engineers, a wireless is going and over it comes "Mr. Baldwin went to Buckingham Palace this morning. The king . . ." and an Italian turns it over to a bellow of "Viva il Duce." You then with great relish tell the driver and the interpreter the dirt. What "Time" published a year ago and what they say of Baldwin and the Archbishop.

Next morning it looks rather dark and the water is frozen in the jug. When you open the door there is a solid wall of snow. The door is six feet high and you can't see any light. This is a bit of a shock but after a cigarette or two you go back to bed. Toward mid-day the voices get louder and a kindly soul puts his spade through the window. As the eight days go by the snow steps out of the room are getting very slippery and most of the engineers are sitting at separate tables.

After Teheran we go south again into warmer parts. We want some stuff of Persepolis and we hear there is a camp of American archaeologists. We roll up after a three hundred mile drive thinking of the ice Americans usually have and how cool the beer will be. Knock politely at the door of a big fine house and ask for an archaeologist. The answer comes back he won't be long, he is having dinner. Ah, we think, just frying more chicken.

Three-quarters of an hour later a bearded man comes and resting one hand on the door and the other on the jamb asks what we want. We are making a film, and we want some shots of Persepolis, and does he know where we can stay for the night. Yes, there is an hotel down the road. We brighten and ask where. "Oh, just about seventy miles down on the right-hand side," and then a voice from inside the house "Haven't those people gone yet, Charles?" With sons of archaeologists, it is better to be a white slaver than to have anything to do with films, and if there are any rods left in Chicago he came from your town and you'll know him by a black goatee.

As we go from town to town the Iranians are nearly always decent, but the Europeans vary. In one town a well-fed Englishman shouts "If the unemployed knew what was good for them they'd pipe down a little. No one is starving until their belly blows out." His belly was blown out. In another the young missionaries brag stupidly and finally go to sleep drunkenly in their chairs.

Geologists and surveyors quietly tell stories of working in the heat and cold; of six-month trips into the mountains and how hard it is at first not having someone to talk to; after a few months not noticing it until you meet someone and even then not wanting to talk until it comes with a rush. The engineers talk of parts of the world and not of countries, they seem not to recognise boundaries. In one camp of fourteen there were two men who had worked in films.

It took twelve long hours mule ride to get to the camp and the first thing I saw in my tent was a copy of WORLD FILM NEWS, and if you think this is a lie you know what you can do.

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Pupper in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal

ACCRINGTON: Ritz	Sept. 23, 3 days
ALLOA: Central	Sept. 9, 3 days
CHELMSFORD: Pavilion	Sept. 13, 3 days
DARFIELD: Empire	Sept. 16, 3 days
EYEMOUTH: Picture House	Sept. 17, 2 days
GRIMSBY: Palace	Sept. 13, 6 days
HOLMEWOOD: Palace	Sept. 2, 3 days
HOLYHEAD: Hippodrome	Sept. 23, 3 days
KIRBY: Cinema	Sept. 13, 3 days
MEADOWFIELD: Kinema	Sept. 2, 3 days
SOUTHWELL: Ideal	Sept. 30, 3 days
TILLYCOULTRY: Cinema	Sept. 23, 3 days
WEST HARTLEPOOL: Gaiety	Sept. 6, 6 days
WIBSEY: Cosy	Sept. 6, 3 days
WOODHALL SPA: Kinema	Sept. 27, 3 days

Beside the Seaside (Documentary of South Coast resorts).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson

STAFFORD: Picture House	Sept. 16, 3 days

Cable Ship (The G.P.O. Cable Ships at work in the Channel).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Stuart Legg

LIVERPOOL: Lytton Cinema	Sept. 11, 1 day
LONDON: Victoria, News Theatre	Sept. 23, 4 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw

ACCRINGTON: Ritz	Sept. 6, 3 days
ASHBOURNE: Elite	Sept. 13, 3 days
BANTRY: Stella	Sept. 23, 3 days
BLACKPOOL: Waterloo	Sept. 26, 7 days
LANCHESTER: Empress	Sept. 10, 2 days
LIVERPOOL: Coliseum, Tranmere	Sept. 20, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing X	Sept. 6, 3 days
Monseigneur, Strand	Sept. 27, 3 days
Strand News, Strand	Sept. 6, 3 days
MEADOWFIELD: Kinema	Sept. 2, 3 days
NEATH: Gnoll	Sept. 20, 6 days
NEWPORT, I.O.W.: Odeon	Sept. 23, 3 days
NORTHAMPTON: Plaza	Sept. 27, 3 days
WEST HARTLEPOOL: Gaiety	Sept. 6, 6 days
WOODHALL SPA: Kinema	Sept. 16, 3 days

Enough to Eat? (Investigation into mal-nutrition).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Gas, Light and Coke Co.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey

GRANTHAM: Picture House	Sept. 30, 3 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor	Sept. 2, 3 days

Firefighters (Documentary of the London Fire Brigade).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Peter Colin

ALTRINCHAM: Regal	Sept. 27, 6 days
COVENTRY: Gaumont Palace	Sept. 19, 1 day
LIVERPOOL: Smithdown Picture Playhouse	Sept. 6, 3 days
SOUTHWOLD: Cinema	Sept. 9, 3 days

Fishing on the Banks of Skye.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit

BRISTOL: Olympia	Sept. 20, 3 days
Premier	Sept. 23, 3 days
LONDON: Victoria News Theatre	Sept. 27, 3 days

Forbidden Frontier (Political situation between Poland and Lithuania).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: World Window Productions
SUPERVISION: Sir Philip Gibbs

BIRKENHEAD: Super	Sept. 9, 3 days
BRAMHALL: Tudor	Sept. 23, 3 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Sept. 6, 3 days
FARNHAM: Regal	Sept. 16, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Sept. 2, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Sept. 2, 3 days
Empress	Sept. 6, 3 days
Gaumont Palace	Sept. 6, 6 days
Tatler	Sept. 6, 3 days
RUNCORN: Empress	Sept. 6, 3 days
SOUTHEND: Kursaal	Sept. 27, 3 days
WALLASEY: Trocadero	Sept. 13, 6 days
WANSTEAD: Kinema	Sept. 27, 3 days

Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns (Historical survey of European events for the past 40 years).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: A. B. Svensk Filmindustri
ENGLISH VERSION: Donald Taylor

WANSTEAD: Kinema	Sept. 16, 3 days

Get Set (Sports film—Polish).
DISTRIBUTION: Cinema Contact
DIRECTION: A. Ford

LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Rd.	Sept. 6, 7 days

Heads and Tails (Greyhound racing).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

ASHTON-UNDER-LYME: Empire	Sept. 20, 6 days
BRIGHOUSE: Ritz	Sept. 2, 3 days
CHATHAM: Picture House	Sept. 2, 3 days
ELTHAM: Palace	Sept. 6, 6 days
HIGHGATE: Electric Palace	Sept. 2, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Olympia	Sept. 6, 3 days
WINDSOR: Empire	Sept. 26, 3 days

Hollywood To-day (Behind the scenes in Film City).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Rupert Grayson

BASINGSTOKE: Grand	Sept. 30, 3 days
CRAYFORD: Princess	Sept. 6, 3 days
GLASGOW: Broadway, Shettleston	Sept. 13, 6 days
Paragon, Gorbals	Sept. 16, 6 days
GRANTHAM: Empire	Sept. 27, 3 days
GUIDE BRIDGE, Lancs.: Odeon	Sept. 27, 6 days
PETERSFIELD: Savoy	Sept. 9, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Don	Sept. 16, 3 days
SOUTHALL: Palace	Sept. 6, 6 days
WINDSOR: Regal	Sept. 9, 3 days

How to be a Detective (In the Benchley manner).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION and DIRECTION: Robert Benchley

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Sept. 1, 4 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

ACCRINGTON: Ritz	Sept. 6, 3 days
ARKLOW: Gaiety	Sept. 3, 2 days
BACUP: Empire	Sept. 29, 4 days
BUXTON: Opera House	Sept. 20, 6 days
GILESGATE: Crescent	Sept. 10, 2 days
HOLYHEAD: Kings	Sept. 23, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Riviera, Cheetham	Sept. 27, 6 days
MELBOURNE: Empire	Sept. 30, 3 days
NANTWICH: Ye Olde Wyche	Sept. 16, 3 days
SCARBOROUGH: Odeon	Sept. 26, 4 days
SCUNTHORPE: Royal	Sept. 16, 3 days
SUNDERLAND: Millfield	Sept. 2, 3 days
TRIMDON: Imperial	Sept. 2, 3 days
WASHINGTON: Queens	Sept. 23, 3 days
WEXFORD: Cinema Palace	Sept. 20, 3 days
WHITBY: Waterloo	Sept. 20, 3 days
WOODHALL SPA: Kinema	Sept. 16, 3 days

Joie de Vivre (Cartoon).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
PRODUCTION: Gross and Hoppin

CHELMSFORD: Ritz	Sept. 2, 3 days
GUILDFORD: Plaza	Sept. 6, 3 days
ILKLEY: New	Sept. 23, 3 days
SUTTON-ON-SEA: Savoy	Sept. 20, 6 days
WIMBLEDON: Regal	Sept. 2, 3 days

Key to Scotland (Documentary of Edinburgh).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson

AIRDRIE: Pavilion	Sept. 23, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Piccadilly	Sept. 6, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House	Sept. 6, 3 days

London after Midnight (Documentary).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Paul Rotha for Strand Films

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Sept. 27, 6 days

Men Against the Sea (Documentary of North Sea trawling).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Vernon Sewell

LONDON: Regal, Golders Green	Sept. 20, 6 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt

ACCRINGTON: Ritz	Sept. 23, 3 days
ASTLEY: Kinema	Sept. 16, 3 days
BIGGAR: Cinema	Sept. 20, 1 day
BLACKBURN: Roxy	Sept. 22, 4 days
CHEADLE HULME: Elysian	Sept. 13, 3 days
MELBOURNE: Empire	Sept. 30, 3 days
NANTWICH: Ye Olde Wyche	Sept. 16, 3 days
NEWPORT, I.O.W.: Odeon	Sept. 20, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Cinema, Poynton	Sept. 6, 3 days
WREXHAM: Odeon	Sept. 6, 3 days

Nomad in the North (Scenic film of Norway).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION and *DIRECTION:* C. E. Hodges

ALLOA: La Scala	Sept. 13, 6 days
BRAMHALL: Tudor	Sept. 27, 3 days
BRIDGWATER: Palace	Sept. 30, 3 days
CHATHAM: Electric	Sept. 5, 7 days
CHESTER: Music Hall	Sept. 20, 3 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Sept. 27, 3 days
FARNHAM: Regal	Sept. 16, 3 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	Sept. 23, 3 days
HARBOURNE: Picture House	Sept. 30, 3 days
ILFRACOMBE: Scala	Sept. 20, 6 days
IPSWICH: Picture House	Sept. 6, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Bedford	Sept. 23, 3 days
Gaumont, Princes Park	Sept. 6, 3 days
LONDON: Broadway Palladium, Ealing	Sept. 6, 7 days
Gaumont Palace, Chelsea	Sept. 6, 7 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House	Sept. 30, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Tower	Sept. 5, 1 day
PALMERS GREEN: Palladium	Sept. 6, 7 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor	Sept. 13, 3 days
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Sept. 20, 6 days

Out to Play (London's children in street and park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Harold Lowenstein

BASINGSTOKE: Plaza	Sept. 12, 4 days
GRAVESEND: Majestic	Sept. 5, 7 days
LEYTON: Plaza	Sept. 20, 6 days
LONDON: Cameo, Victoria	Sept. 6, 3 days
Centre, Windmill Street	Sept. 6, 3 days
News Theatre, Waterloo	Sept. 27, 3 days

Overland Express (German travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges Productions

BRAMHALL: Tudor	Sept. 9, 3 days
BRIDGWATER: Palace	Sept. 20, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 9, 3 days
FARNHAM: Regal	Sept. 2, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Sept. 23, 3 days
LYDNEY: Picture House	Sept. 16, 3 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor	Sept. 2, 3 days

Plane Sailing (The ins and outs of gliding).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Bosworth Goldman

BARNSLEY: Princess	Sept. 2, 3 days
BIRMINGHAM: Gaumont Palace	Sept. 5, 7 days
Odeon, Warley	Sept. 13, 6 days
BRIDGWATER: Palace	Sept. 6, 3 days
BUXTON: Spa	Sept. 2, 3 days
CHEPSTOW: Palace	Sept. 9, 3 days

Shorts (contd.)

Plane Sailing—continued

CINDERFORD: Palace — Sept. 23, 3 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House — Sept. 13, 3 days
GLASGOW: Vogue, Rutherglen — Sept. 27, 3 days
GOOLE: Tower — Sept. 9, 3 days
HULL: Langham — Sept. 9, 3 days
ILFRACOMBE: Scala — Sept. 27, 3 days
LEEK: Grand — Sept. 6, 7 days
LONDON: Rivoli, Whitechapel — Sept. 6, 7 days
LYDNEY: Picture House — Sept. 20, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler — Sept. 1, 4 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House — Sept. 6, 3 days
MOTHERWELL: La Scala — Sept. 2, 3 days
ROYAL: Cinema Royal — Sept. 27, 3 days
SALISBURY: Picture House — Sept. 9, 3 days
STOKE-ON-TRENT: Hippodrome — Sept. 23, 3 days
TUNBRIDGE WELLS: Kosmos — Sept. 16, 3 days
WARRINGTON: Odeon — Sept. 13, 6 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor — Sept. 30, 3 days
WILMSLOW: Rex — Sept. 2, 3 days
WISHAW: Cinema — Sept. 2, 3 days

Secret Hiding Places (Priest holes to be found in English country houses).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Granville Squiers

BIRMINGHAM: Grand, Alum Rock — Sept. 27, 6 days
GRANTHAM: Picture House — Sept. 13, 3 days
HIGHGATE: Empire — Sept. 12, 4 days
NEWTOWN: Regent — Sept. 23, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House — Sept. 13, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Cinema, Poynton — Sept. 23, 3 days
WELSHPOOL: Clive — Sept. 27, 3 days

Six Thirty Collection (Documentary of the West End sorting office).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey, Harry Watt

BIGGAR: Cinema — Sept. 23, 1 day
BRADFORD: Grange — Sept. 6, 3 days

Snow Water (Water power in the Swiss mountains).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: H. Dreyer

BIRKENHEAD: Plaza — Sept. 13, 6 days
BRAMHALL: Tudor — Sept. 20, 3 days
BURY: Odeon — Sept. 20, 6 days
CHESTERFIELD: Picture House — Sept. 13, 6 days
FINSBURY PARK: Rink — Sept. 6, 6 days
GRANTHAM: Picture House — Sept. 23, 3 days
HALIFAX: Picture House — Sept. 20, 6 days
HARBORNE: Picture House — Sept. 16, 3 days
HULL: Criterion — Sept. 13, 6 days
LONDON: Eros, Piccadilly — Sept. 16, 3 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House — Sept. 13, 3 days
PETERBOROUGH: Broadway — Sept. 6, 6 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace — Sept. 13, 3 days
RHYL: Plaza — Sept. 23, 3 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House — Sept. 9, 3 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor — Sept. 27, 3 days
WOOD GREEN: Gaumont Palace — Sept. 6, 6 days
YORK: Odeon — Sept. 20, 6 days

Spring Comes to Town (About Hyde Park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION and PHOTOGRAPHY: M. L. Nathan

LONDON: Cameo, Charing Cross Rd. — Sept. 2, 4 days
Cameo, Victoria — Sept. 9, 4 days
Centre, Windmill Street — Sept. 9, 4 days
WINDSOR: Playhouse — Sept. 26, 5 days

Strange Adventures (About Africa).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra — Sept. 27, 3 days
ANDOVER: Odeon — Sept. 23, 3 days
BARNSLEY: Empire — Sept. 6, 6 days
BARROW: Coliseum — Sept. 20, 3 days
BIRKENHEAD: Super — Sept. 23, 3 days
CHORLEY: Theatre Royal — Sept. 16, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace — Sept. 23, 3 days
FARNBOROUGH: Scala — Sept. 20, 3 days
FARNHAM: Regal — Sept. 27, 3 days
FLEET: County — Sept. 20, 3 days
GLASGOW: Kings — Sept. 27, 3 days
HARROW: Odeon — Sept. 2, 3 days
HULL: Regis — Sept. 27, 3 days
Royalty — Sept. 2, 3 days
ILKLEY: New — Sept. 20, 3 days

Strange Adventures—continued

KILMARNOCK: Regal — Sept. 6, 3 days
LEYTON: Kings — Sept. 2, 3 days
Plaza — Sept. 13, 6 days
LICHFIELD: Regal — Sept. 16, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Empress — Sept. 9, 3 days
Magnet — Sept. 23, 3 days
LONDON: News Theatre, Victoria — Sept. 6, 3 days
Walpole, Ealing — Sept. 2, 3 days
LYDNEY: Picture House — Sept. 27, 3 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House — Sept. 23, 3 days
NEWPORT, I.O.W.: Odeon — Sept. 9, 3 days
NORWICH: Carlton — Sept. 2, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium — Sept. 12, 1 day
STAINES: Majestic — Sept. 2, 3 days

The Way to the Sea (The roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes

MANCHESTER: Tatler — Sept. 13, 6 days

Weather Forecast (How information is gathered for official forecasts).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Evelyn Spice

SOUTHPORT: Queens — Sept. 13, 2 days
EASINGWOLD: Cinema — Sept. 23, 3 days

Foreign Films

A Castle in Flanders (German)
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
DIRECTION: Geza de Bolvary
STARRING: Marta Eggerth
Paul Hartmann

LONDON: Berkeley — Sept. 1, indefinitely

The Crime of Monsieur Lange (French)
DIRECTION: Jean Renoir
STARRING: Jules Berry
René Lefèvre
Slorelle

LONDON: Curzon — Following *Stradivarius*

L'Equipage (French)
PRODUCTION: Pathé
DIRECTION: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Jean Murat
Annabella

LONDON: Studio One — Sept. 11, indefinitely

Liebesmelodie (German)
DISTRIBUTION: Independent
DIRECTION: Tourjanski
STARRING: Marta Eggerth

LONDON: Forum — Sept. 5, 7 days

The New Gulliver (Russian puppet film)
DISTRIBUTION: Soyukino
DIRECTION: A. Ptushko

LONDON: Forum — Sept. 12, 7 days

Remous (French)
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Edmond Greville
STARRING: Jean Galland
Jeanne Boitel

LONDON: Studio One — Sept. 1, 4 days

Stradivarius (German)
DISTRIBUTION: Tobis
DIRECTION: Geza de Bolvary
STARRING: Edwige Feuillère
Pierre Richard Willm

LONDON: Curzon — Sept. 1, indefinitely

The Student of Prague (Austrian)
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Arthur Robison
STARRING: Anton Walbrook
Dorothea Wieck

LONDON: Studio One — Sept. 5, 7 days

Feature Films for September Release

This is not a complete list of current releases, but a *W.F.N.* selection. While all poor and mediocre films are omitted from the list, inclusion does not necessarily infer outstanding merit. For the guidance of our readers, films starred in *Review of Reviews* are again starred.

A Day at the Races (M.G.M.) * * *
DIRECTOR: Sam Wood
STARRING: Marx Brothers

Born to Dance (M.G.M.) **
DIRECTOR: Roy del Ruth
STARRING: Eleanor Powell
James Stewart
Una Merkel
Virginia Bruce

Camille (M.G.M.) **
DIRECTOR: George Cukor
STARRING: Greta Garbo
Robert Taylor
Jessie Ralph
Lionel Barrymore

Elephant Boy (United Artists—London Films) **
DIRECTOR: Robert Flaherty
Zoltan Korda
STARRING: Sabu
Walter Hudd

After the Thin Man (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: W. S. Van Dyke
STARRING: William Powell
Myrna Loy
James Stewart
Elissa Landi

Fire Over England (United Artists—London Films) *
DIRECTOR: William K. Howard
STARRING: Flora Robson
Laurence Olivier
Vivien Leigh
Leslie Banks
Raymond Massey

Shall We Dance? (Radio) *
DIRECTOR: Mark Sandrich
STARRING: Fred Astaire
Ginger Rogers

Charge of the Light Brigade (First National)
DIRECTOR: Michael Curtiz
STARRING: Errol Flynn
Olivia de Haviland

Lloyd's of London (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Henry King
STARRING: Madeleine Carroll
Tyrone Power
Freddie Bartholomew
Sir Guy Standing

On the Avenue (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Roy del Ruth
STARRING: Dick Powell
Madeleine Carroll
Alice Faye
Ritz Brothers

Prince and the Pauper (Warner Bros.)
DIRECTOR: William Keighley
STARRING: Errol Flynn
Claude Rains
Billy and Bobbie Mauch

For the first time the REAL work of the fleet in "OUR ISLAND NATION"

For the first time the real work of the Fleet at Sea can be shown to the public in dramatic form.

Thanks to the close and continuous co-operation of the Admiralty, "Our Island Nation" gives the point of view of the Naval Rating, as well as that of the Officer. It is a " close-up " of conditions as they actually occur every day.

The original story was written by two retired Naval Officers—Commander Hunt and Commander Brinton. They and the unit of camera men experienced terrific gale conditions. They worked in ships, aircraft and aircraft carriers of the Home and Mediterranean Fleets during the combined manoeuvres in the Atlantic last March, and at Gibraltar, Malta and in the Mediterranean during January, February and March.

With STANLEY HOLLOWAY as Chief Yeoman of Signals. ***Running time* 60 *minutes.***

PRESS REPORTS:

"Magnificent photography of the services that the Royal Navy renders to the Nation."
"The Times," July 31, 1937

" An impression much happier than the usual official record . . . Jack Tar emerges as a human being and not a movie puppet."
" Glasgow Herald," July 31, 1937

"May justly be termed the best film of the work of the British Navy yet produced . . . Battleships are seen in a terrific gale and these shots alone give the film an outstanding value . . . but even better follows. . . . "
" Scotsman," July 31, 1937

"The Navy has done it at last . . . Camera work is truly magnificent . . . 'shots' which must be unique."
"Morning Post," July 31, 1937
and numerous others.

Other films by E.G.S. include "Edinburgh Zoo," *" charming studies,"* *" especially delightful"* (*" Cinema"*); " West Wind," *" many thrills,"* *" fine photography,"* *" unusual"* (*" Cinema"*); " Poland " *"informative,"* *"thoughtful description"* (*"Cinema"*)
and 180 Educational Subjects.

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37 GOLDEN SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

PRODUCERS OF

"FILMS *that* TELL"

WORLD FILM NEWS

AMATEUR AND TECHNICAL SECTION

If I were Entering the A.S.C. Contest

by

Andrew Buchanan

I SHOULD select the British Countryside for three reasons. Firstly, because it is so accessible, secondly, in view of the fact that it is grossly overdone, and thirdly because, being so overdone, it would force me to seek an original line of approach. It is a strange fact that subjects which are rarely handled by producers invariably assume an air of originality merely because they have not been seen before, whereas, in many instances, they are most uninspired. Consequently, I would prefer to approach a well-worn type of subject, and endeavour to give it a new complexion.

It will be noted that Shell-Mex offer prizes for films of the British Countryside, and so I should seek to portray the right place for the motor car in the country, which is not quite the same thing as regarding it as the be all and end all of a motoring holiday.

I should build the picture around the theme that a car is a means to an end by performing the magical feat of bringing distant country places nearer—of placing inaccessible spots within easy reach of the ordinary family. This vital fact is rather taken for granted to-day, and when one encounters a hidden village or an isolated farmhouse, one rarely pauses to realise that, less than a quarter of a century ago, such places were in another world beyond our reach, and never gazed upon by people who, but a few hours previously, were probably lunching in London. Therefore, I should commence with this point in mind, and I should develop the theme by revealing the fact that a car, correctly utilised, carries people to lovely places.

The introduction should embody an impression of the mentality of the insane motorist who never leaves his vehicle, never stops, and who spends his entire holiday rushing up and down the country, seeing nothing save the rear of the car ahead, which he must either pass or die in the attempt. The charming and interesting spots he *passes* are too numerous to mention. Each delightful village is but another milestone conquered on the way to his final destination, if he has one.

The contrast would be afforded by the leisurely, though far from sluggish motorist who regards his car as a means to reach distant places *and then begin* his holiday, embarking on a voyage of discovery, on foot. There is such a great difference between the two methods of approaching a motoring holiday that I really do feel an excellent and original film can be created out of the theme, which offers a good foundation upon which to construct the basic subject—the British Countryside.

I should, therefore, begin by creating an impression of this Motor Age by introducing *contrasting* shots of giant motor roads, along which endless streams of cars are tearing—escaping into the country, but, ironically enough, missing its beauties, in many instances.

Follow the introductory shots of broad white roads with an amusing sequence revealing how the countryside appears to the insane motorist. Select several attractive spots and shoot them whilst swinging the camera rapidly and jerkily from one side to another. Secondly, take a number of close shots of car wheels flying past the camera, and others of vehicles racing along. The latter to be taken by the camera very near the roadside, facing the traffic so that the results shall be blurred. Intercut the swinging shots of country scenes, which should appear distorted—a mass of streaks—with the wheels and cars, and strengthen the sequence with close-ups of speedometers registering high speeds, and other shots taken from a fast-moving car, the camera concentrating upon the receding road at the back, and then the aspect from near the front wings.

Intelligently assembled, all those scenes can create an astonishingly fast prologue to the major film, and the blurred jumpy shots will convey the countryside as seen by the speeding driver. Now for the other side of the picture—featuring, of course, the Director himself, who is all that a sane, sensible motorist should be! His holiday follows the mad prologue, and commences with a large scale map. A finger points to a particular centre, and then traces all the interesting little places within walking distance. That dissolves into an impression of starting off—luggage being strapped on—engine throbbing—brake released—exhaust puffing—wheels moving away. Then several shots of the car en route, travelling normally, that is, at a good average speed to avoid creating a ridiculous comparison with the other speeding cars. The journey can be punctuated by various road signs which show the increasing mileage, the final one to merge into the car slowing down and stopping. Engine switched off, brake engaged, luggage unstrapped, and people leaving the vehicle.

Thereafter, the film establishes the model motorists as people who actually possess legs. Indeed, this is so remarkable that several lengthy close-ups are advisable, which concentrate upon the feet and limbs of the wise walkers. The balance of the film can then be devoted to a leisurely survey of well chosen villages, architecture, harvesting, rural industries, or whatever truly symbolises the British Countryside from the Director's point of view. Nearby locations of real interest which are beyond walking distance, can be introduced smoothly by using the car wheels as links, and would help to keep alive the theme of the production—the place of the car in the countryside.

I should be inclined to terminate the film with an epilogue revealing the two distinct types of motorists under discussion, both having returned from their holidays. The first is the insane gentleman, wearing huge goggles and a wide smile. He holds a map in his trembling hand, and his finger traces, at lightning speed, the enormous journey he has done—from Lands End to John O' Groats, *via* Wales, Brighton, three hospitals and Blackpool. He went everywhere and saw nothing. The second is seen studying a tiny area in which he stayed and, incidentally, captured on the screen for our enjoyment.

That is but one idea for approaching the British Countryside somewhat differently. Rural places do not change, but the very fact that they have become accessible through the car should lead the Director to do equal justice to both the vehicle which brings them near, and the beauties of the spots themselves. I suggest the above outline is preferable to the somewhat boring car film, which features very large families at very large picnics, each scene of which is usually shot to include the bonnet of the car which brought them, sticking out forbiddingly in the foreground. The British Countryside is a gift from God; and the motor car will take you to the farthest corners of the nation, though it can never reveal the inner charms of Nature.

FILM SOCIETIES AND AMATEUR CLUBS

AYR FILM UNIT: Hon. Secretary, A. Cunningham, Esq., 8 Alexandra Avenue, Prestwick, Ayrshire.

Since the last report, members of the Unit have been engaged on the production of an advertising film of Ayr, being made for Ayr Attractions Committee. This film, which was commenced in the last week of June, is now almost complete—over seventy of its hundred odd scenes having been shot. The remaining ones are mainly routine, continuity scenes, titles, etc.

A large number of copies will be made for the Attractions Committee, who have made arrangements to have them circulated both in this country and abroad.

Apart from the making of this film, which has occupied a large number of members, there has been little Club activity. The Committee is now considering the winter programme, and the Scenario section is hunting for a suitable story for the next production. They hope to have this ready to put before the Annual General Meeting this month.

BLACKHEATH FILM CLUB: Hon. Secretary, John Gibson, 6 St. German's Place, London, S.E.3.

Announces a Gala Week to be held in the Studio, 2 Banchory Road, Blackheath, at 8.30 p.m. each evening from October 11th to 16th. The programme will include the Club's latest film (a comedy of the Naughty Nineties) supported by a newsreel and films by members. Hopes that solo workers and Clubs who can pay a visit during that week will do so; Blackheath amateurs will be glad to see them. Admission by ticket, obtainable from the Hon. Secretary, or from any member. Apply early—120 a night is the limit.

Members, in addition to the Gala Week preparations, are busy overhauling the Club's lighting outfit, and planning for the next film to be started in November.

BOGNOR REGIS FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Miss L. Cornish, "Southernhay," New Barn Lane, Felpham, Sussex.

Production No. 7 (at the moment untitled) is nearing completion. The story has filmed very successfully, and should be one of the best comedies the Society has produced.

The air chase sequence, taken at the Ford Aero Club, made a fine climax to the film. No. 1 cameraman Mr. Barry Hart filmed from the air, and No. 2, Mr. Brooker, had the ground camera. Both shots matched well.

The Film Editor estimates that the picture can be cut down to 800 ft. as originally planned.

Members recently had the pleasure of a visit from Dr. Barker of the Palmers Green Society, who explained the new continuous printer which they had made. He also showed one or two of their films, of a very high standard, and taken on Neg. Pos. stock. As the Bognor Regis Society works on Rev. stock, a very interesting discussion took place.

Miss Patricia Hutchins also visited the Society, and members spent an interesting evening delving into film topics.

THE DON BOSCO GUILD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Terence Grant, B.Sc., Catholic Institute, Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow.

The Society, headed by the Guild of Catholic Teachers, was formed in October of last year. Since its inception fortnightly meetings have been held and many activities successfully carried out. The following lectures have been given: "The Film in Education," by Mr. J. P. Kennedy, M.A.; "Teaching Technique and the Film," by Mr. William Bailey, M.A., Ed.B.; "The British Film Institute," by Miss E. Duff, M.A.; and "The Secrets of Nature Films," by Mr. T. Grant, B.Sc.

Numerous educational and religious films have been viewed by members, and their value for school use noted. The Group is primarily concerned with films suitable for religious instruction in schools, and is seeking information in this respect both at home and abroad.

Last year a repertory show was given in the Catholic Institute for Catholic teachers, the programme including the Mill Hill missionary film of Uganda. It is intended to give several of these shows next winter.

This year the Society has produced a colour film of the "Corpus Christi" procession at Carfin Grotto (450 ft.), and is now preparing to film the "Madonna Procession" on the feast of the Assumption.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, R. Cordwell, Esq., 13 Milwain Drive, Heaton Chapel, Stockport.

The following arrangements have been made:

Film Selection Committee:

Chairman (Mr. T. Cavanagh), Mr. Cyril Ray (Manager, Tatler Cinema) and the Hon. Secretary.

Subscription:

10*s.* per annum, which may be paid if desired in not more than five consecutive monthly instalments.

Films Booked (awaiting confirmation):

September 26th: *Madrid To-day*, *We Live in Two Worlds*, *Opta Empfangt*, *La Journée d'André*, and *Fredlös*.

October 24th: *The World To-day*, *Heute Grosse Dampferfahrt*, *Stoff Marchen*, *Development of the Franchise* and *The Robber Symphony* (alternatively, original version of *The Unfinished Symphony*).

November 21st: *Millions of Us*, *To-day We Live*, *The Hunt*, and *Merlusse*.

Further shows will be arranged monthly from December to April. Applications for membership welcomed.

WEST ESSEX FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, F. J. Philpott, Esq., 7 Wellington Road, East Ham. E.6.

Further progress has been made in the shooting of *Hiking*, of which most of the outdoor shots have now been taken. Shooting is proceeding apace in connection with *Pot of Basil*, under Mr. S. Reed's direction. Mr. Reed is also responsible for the scenario, based on Keat's story "Boccaccio."

WEST MIDDLESEX AMATEUR CINE CLUB: E. H. Whittleton, Esq., 39 Derwentwater Road, Acton, W.3.

Shooting on *It Can't Happen Here* has now been completed, and the film is in the cutting room. A new production is planned for September, and several stories are in the hands of the selection committee.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Club Studios, 43 Bond Street, Ealing, W.5, on Tuesday, September 14th, at 8.30 p.m. Activities during the past year will be surveyed, and the programme for 1937–38 placed before members. Members of other Clubs are welcome to this and other meetings of the West Middlesex A.C.C.

FILM SOCIETIES IN CANADA

by Margaret J. Miller

Canada's nine film societies, strung out at intervals across a wide continent, have had peculiar problems to deal with. Their remoteness from Europe, their dependence on the United States for many of their films, the question of co-operation where distances are so great, have all contributed in making it difficult to obtain good and promptly delivered programmes.

In the Montreal Film Society we became well accustomed, during our first season of 1935–36, to being suddenly disappointed of films which we had hoped and expected to see. We also had to put up with a good deal of inferior material. Other Canadian film societies had the same experiences, and for the same reasons.

It was discovered, for one thing, that the American distributors who sent us our films from New York knew very little about the programmes they were providing. A film recommended as "a good Russian short" turned out to be four reels of tedious and repetitive semi-medical material which pleased no one in the audience. Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, advertised as a silent film and ordered as such, was sent along with an excruciatingly sentimental Hollywood commentary added to it.

So undependable was the taste of the suppliers that the Montreal society made a practice of ordering several shorts, previewing them in the theatre of a Montreal film producing organisation, and showing the better films, or the less bad, from the selection provided.

Unexpected difficulties with the customs cropped up now and then. On the day on which the Swedish film *En Natt* was to be shown a telegram was received from the American customs officials saying that since the print was a Swedish one with no American manufacture in it, full duty—amounting to some

(Film Societies in Canada—contd.)

£160—would have to be paid when it was sent back to the States. Needless to say, the order for *En Natt* was cancelled.

The French film question is still a troublesome one. Canada, with a large percentage of French-Canadians in her population, uses many French films, and an organisation called France Films has the distributing rights for these. Because of this, no American distributor will ship a French film to a Canadian film society even though it is unobtainable through France Films. There may be plenty of prints of René Clair films in New York, but unless the Canadian distributors can supply one, it is practically impossible to get a Clair film for film society showing.

La Kermesse Héroïque came out to Canada some time ago, was seen and banned by the censor while still in bond, and went straight back to France again. Here again there were prints in New York, and no chance of getting one.

But although certain annoyances persisted, the season of 1936–37 saw many improvements. In September 1936 a film booking office was formed at the headquarters of the National Film Society in Ottawa, and societies all over Canada were encouraged to get their films through its agency. In this way films could be booked for a number of showings instead of for one only, and Canada received more consideration and a cheaper rate from American distributors.

The standard of shorts available to societies went up considerably when, through the negotiations of John Grierson, British documentaries were sent from England to the Dominion Film Bureau at Ottawa.

Gradually, too, societies were collecting more information about films in which they might be interested. At the beginning of things, the ordering of a film was often a shot in the dark, since films had to be chosen from lists of names without information as to director, cast, or date of production. For this reason the Montreal society started to build up a catalogue of cuttings from film reviews and from the programmes of film societies all over the world, which may now be referred to in deciding which films are the most desirable.

The material obtainable, however, is still somewhat limited. It is not a case of saying "We want this film" and promptly getting it, but of choosing the best of what can be got.

In the matter of educational films Canada is better off. The film society movement has in many provinces taken an educational turn, and several universities have installed film equipment. The University of Alberta has laid in a huge library of 16 mm. films of educational value, and the Vancouver branch of the National Film Society is trying to encourage the establishment of a library of educational films for British Columbia schools.

Lately all societies have been helping to make a Catalogue of Film Sources in Canada, so that any educational body in need of a film can apply to the nearest film society and be told what is available. While Canada's film societies are apt to be disappointed of the programmes they wish to see, her schools and universities can be well served.

FILMING BRITAIN—Article No. 5

Summing up the opportunities for Amateurs entering the A.S.C. Contest

by Evelyn Spice

It is five months since the Amateur Services Club was organised to give help and encouragement to amateurs to film the life of Britain.

Much correspondence and talk has resulted, and out of it all has come some constructive criticism which leads me to make some suggestions to members.

To the front, in word from the clubs, came the problem of how—if the club went over to documentary films—all the members could be put to work on the film. However much I have talked about using the members as natural "actors" in a documentary, I have failed to put the point across. So letting that pass, we finally hit upon the idea of a documentary group within the club. In two cases—Ace Movies and the Blackheath Film Club—this arrangement is already in operation, and both groups are busy on films. The documentary group has the club's equipment behind them and can use the studio lamps and the studio itself for their close-ups and stage shots or sequences. For shooting on actual location quite often proves totally impracticable. To have the use of a studio to re-stage the scene is invaluable.

There have been a good few letters which show that some amateurs do not quite realise the scope of the documentary, and are inclined to look upon it as pure scenic stuff, or a glorified newsreel. While, in reality, the documentary people always urge the need for more human stuff in the films—and point to Flaherty as an example. The good documentary, they urge, should be dramatic and should present people as human beings, not parts of machines, or robots. Flaherty dramatised his Eskimo family without resorting to cheap plot. He might have had a strong plot so long as he did not sacrifice his Eskimo people to it.

In *Elephant Boy* the plot was a cheap affair, but it could not kill the character of the small Indian boy. He and his elephant were the film and strongly dramatic enough to have dispensed completely with the accepted idea of a plot.

The plain fact of it is, that two reels will not carry a strong plot. But they will carry, and must have, a theme. (And I keep wondering if the short story—well handled and specially written—could not be well handled in two reels.)

I must get on to my second point, about filming one's own district.

For years back, teachers and all users of educational and documentary films, have been wanting interesting accounts, on film, of sections of Britain. Towns, industries, architecture, etc.

So great has been the need for them that many teachers have started making their own films of their locality, to use in their classrooms. W. H. George, an early experimenter in educational pictures in the classroom, has made several films in his holiday time because he could find none to fit in with his curriculum.

Non-theatrical audiences throughout the country number many thousands and there is a great need for suitable films.

Who is more capable, then, of filming their own locality than the amateurs who live there, know the people, what they do, how they live? There is a local pride in the town or village or community that the stranger misses, probably, and so much local detail that the film-maker from outside might need months to do a good job of scripting. And there it lies, for the amateur to capture on film. He has the opportunity at hand to reveal (to audiences much larger than he quite realises) the true life of his community, as he would like it presented.

The *Glasgow Bulletin*, commenting on the fact that a competition was open for films about Youth Hostels, puts it in a nutshell.

> "The offer opens up a hitherto neglected field for hostel propaganda, and the cine-camera might be called to the aid of the S.Y.H.A. Films could be shot by the Association for use in the winter lectures given to the various organisations, and would give the outsider a vivid impression of hostel life.
>
> "Perhaps it might take a Grierson or a Korda to do justice to the infinite variety of the movement, but from the wealth of material, even amateurs can prepare a scenario that will make a colourful film.
>
> "Most of the hostels are set against beautiful country and a film of a tour in the Borders or by way of the North-West chain would have no dearth of scenic material. The quick growth of the movement lends itself to a pictorial record of such early hostels as Inverbeg compared with the palatial castles of Dalquharrah and Hoddom."

The amateur has the opportunity. He knows his locality. He may, in spite of that, find himself at a loss to see anything to film. So close is he to his subject that he cannot get back from it and view it impersonally enough to get a script idea or theme.

The Amateur Services Club, looking in from the outside, offers to help him find a theme, to point out the things that might be overlooked by one who knows them very well.

All corners of Britain may be filmed in a sympathetic manner. And with these films a large library may be built up to fill the great gap in the educational curriculum, and the blank spaces in all non-theatrical programmes.

The closing date of the first contest, fixed for October 31st has, in response to many requests for more time, been put forward to November 30th.

Full particulars with regard to the Orient Line films will be given in the next issue.

For full particulars regarding the Amateur Services Club (announced in the May issue of World Film News) write to Miss Evelyn Spice, c/o World Film News, 9 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

The Master Film for Sub-standard Movies

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Sound

In addition to the fact that the thoroughly comprehensive range of Ciné-Kodak Films provides a grade appropriate to every cine purpose—whether that be the filming of baby on the lawn, an amateur photo-play in colour, or an industrial selling " short "—there are other powerful arguments in its favour.

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" Kodachrome " Film (16 mm.). A full colour film without grain, " screen " or pattern of any kind. Requires no filters on camera or projector. Fast as Ciné-Kodak Panchromatic Film. Special Type "A" is available for use with " Photoflood " lighting.

" Kodachrome " Eight Film (8 mm. after processing). This year, colour movies are brought within reach of Ciné-Kodak Eight users. " Kodachrome " Eight has the same emulsion as the 16 mm. stock described above, but is specially perforated for the Ciné-Kodak Eight. Special " Kodachrome " Eight Type "A" is available for use with " Photoflood " lighting.

16 mm. Sound Recording Film. Perforated on one edge only. The following emulsions are available for sound recording with variable width and variable density systems.

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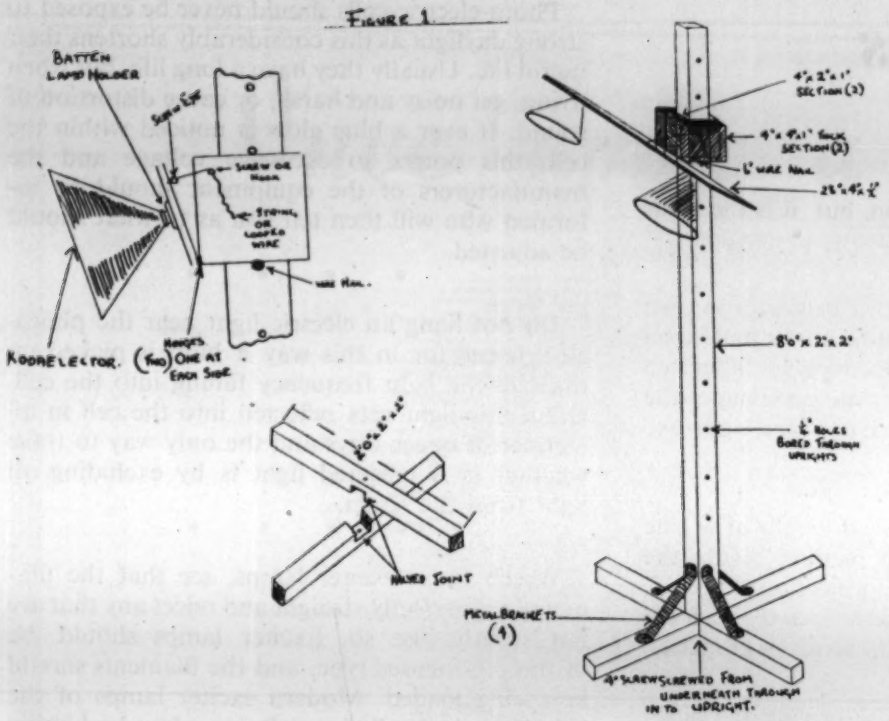
A Cheap Lighting Kit for Studio and Location

by G. R. COOPER

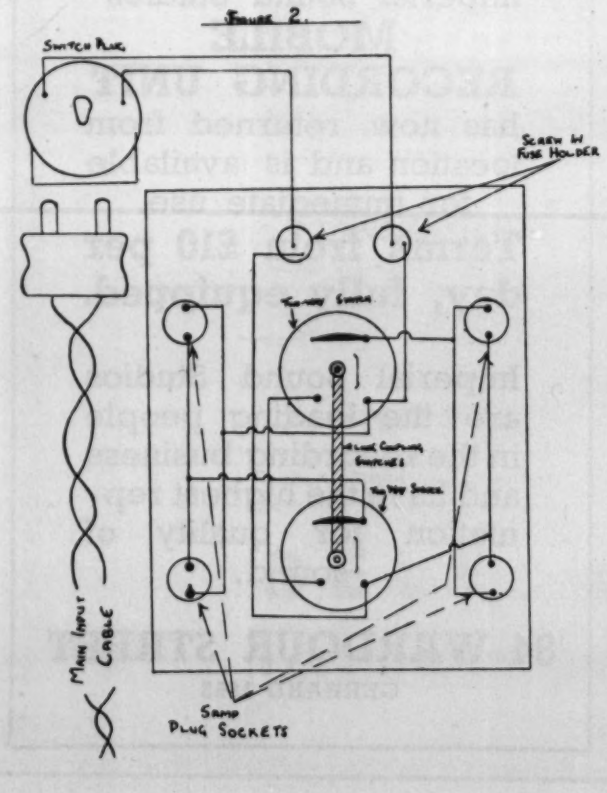


With the approach of the dark evenings most amateurs' thoughts will turn to the question of lighting equipment and it is the purpose of this article to describe a convenient and cheap outfit which can be used in the studio but which has sufficient flexibility to be easily transported for use on location.

The lighting scheme uses Photoflood lamps in reflectors mounting in pairs on uprights 8 ft. high. The mounting brackets can be raised, lowered or tilted to concentrate the light on any desired position. Figure 1 shows the construction and dimensions of the uprights and brackets.

In addition to the four stands carrying eight lamps provision is made for four, or more, extra lamps which can be mounted on single stands, such as the Kodak "Kodaflector" or "Ensign Multiflood" or as an alternative the lamps are simply fitted into reflectors and hung from cross wires when used for top-lighting any particular subject. Figure 4 shows the stands and one top-light in use during the production of the Ayr Film Unit's *Checkmate*. The top-light can be seen suspended to the left of the cameraman's head.

Any number of lamps between 2 and 20 (if funds permit) may be used, the only point being to ensure that your main cable has a maximum current-carrying capacity suitable for full loads and also that it is of sufficient size to avoid any undue voltage drop when using long extension leads from the main supply point.



The supply cable runs to a switching panel fitted into an attaché case where it connects *via* a plug and socket. From this point the wiring runs to two screw-in type fuse holders (fused according to the current taken). This can be easily calculated by allowing 1.0 amp. per Photoflood lamp.

From the fuse holders the wires go to two two-way switches linked together which are wired as in Figure 2 to allow the lamps to be switched on and used in series for heating the filaments and for all preliminary arranging of light and camera positions, the switch only being thrown over to parallel connections for exposure tests and actual shooting.

It should be noted here that this method of heating and burning the lamps in series is a means of greatly extending the life of the Photofloods. In the writer's experience the actual burning times were three hours at full voltage and about nine hours at half voltage when in series. So far only three out of twelve have burned out and it is hoped to get quite a bit more life from each of the remaining lamps. When one considers that the makers only rate these lamps for 2 hours intermittent burning the saving effected here is a very substantial item.

From the switch the wires run to four or more 5-amp. sockets and separate flexible leads for each lamp are plugged in by means of adaptors. Care is needed when plugging in the lamps to ensure that the same numbers are used from each side of the circuit as otherwise the lack of balance will be obvious when switching on by some of the lamps lighting at full intensity and others at half. However, tests with the switch in the 'Half' position will soon reveal any errors.

Figure 3 shows the wiring arranged for 6 lamps. It will be seen that two sockets and one plug connection are used in place of the two-way switches, as when the outfit was first constructed no switch of a suitable type and capacity was available. It is understood that these switches can now be obtained from Messrs. Crabtree.

Sundry accessories such as multiple plug adaptors, multiple Bayonet cap adaptors, B.C. to Plug adaptors and *vice versa* are included in the kit and are used for breaking into any one lead when there is insufficient flex to permit a direct lead from the switch-board. Various lengths of flex leads for lamp connections generally are included and a small notebook is kept permanently inside the case. In this all details of lighting are entered for each scene shot. Those of most importance are (1) Rough plan of the set with light positions, distances and approximate camera position. (2) Number of lamps used. (3) Actual burning time at full voltage.

For use on location away from the studio the apparatus is quickly dismantled and packed, all flexible wires and connectors being carried inside the switch case compartment. The reflectors are dismantled and packed in the original cartons as also are the lamps. The main input cable is coiled up and fastened with a rubber band.

If required the mounting brackets can be removed from the uprights and taken also as they take up very little extra space and they provide a means of concentrating the illumination, being held in the hand or rested on any convenient piece of furniture.

The cost of the outfit excluding lamps and reflectors is under £2. This investment will amply repay itself in the saving on the life of the lamps.

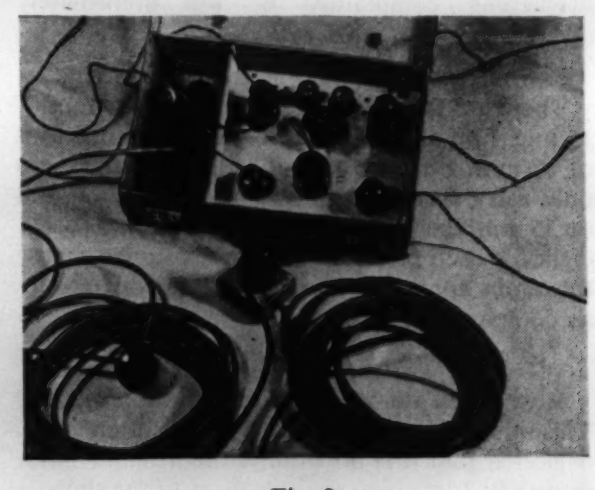


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Technical Tit-Bits

by DAVID MYERS

Re a perennial question that is always cropping up. Why is it that sometimes the wheels of motors, etc., appear stationary when obviously the vehicle is moving forward or backward on the screen? Sometimes the wheel spokes appear to be travelling backwards and sometimes forward, even standing still when the wheel is rotating in either direction at a much faster speed.

Briefly it is because the movement on the screen is not the rate of the moving wheel, and there is a differential between it and the frequency at which the pictures were photographed. Let us suppose that a 24-spoke wheel is revolving once a second, while the film photographing it is travelling at 24 pictures per second, each picture taken on the film will coincide exactly with the movement of the spoke, therefore there will be nothing to indicate its movement on the screen, when the spokes will appear to be stationary. From this it can be calculated what effect a slower or faster travelling wheel would have on the screen, when bearing in mind the speed of the camera operating on 24 or 16 picture speeds.

* * * *

"How can I remove the blackening from within the bulb of an old exciter-lamp," writes a reader of *W.F.N.*

Bring half a pint of methylated spirit mixed with one part of petrol to the boil on a gas ring, drop into the boiling spirit the exciter lamp together with one ounce of Lux. At the same time mention the name of your favourite flower and pray the Lord you will be granted—and the blackening complained of will immediately disappear.

* * * *

There are forty separate pictures to one foot of 16 mm. film and 16 separate pictures to one foot of 35 mm. But in one foot of 16 mm. there are only forty sprocket holes—one per picture, and on 35 mm. there are 128 sprocket holes per foot—eight for each picture. From this, you will realise the strain applied to the perforations on 16 mm. as compared to 35 mm.

* * * *

How often do you lubricate your projector? This most important factor is so often sadly neglected that it is no wonder the machine has a short life. Just a few seconds prior to the show, a drip here and a drip there will make all the difference to it, and believe me, will save you pounds in the long run. But do not oil the film gate, or any part of the mechanism where the film comes in contact, otherwise damage of another sort will result.

* * * *

A reader asks "Can I obtain glass beads for my plain white screen, and if so, how can I fix them?" You can obtain such beads from Winsor & Newtons or from Reeves, who are large manufacturers of artists' materials; but as to fixing them, I would suggest you leave that job to the experts. The fixative for the beads can also be purchased, but the real problem lies in the even distribution of them on the screen. Sometimes they are blown on through an electrical sprayer, sometimes dusted on, but it is the trade of a skilled worker.

* * * *

The action of a photo electric cell incorporated in the sound head of a film projector is that when light falls on the cathode, electrons are liberated which are in turn amplified by the gasfilling of the cell, and attracted to the anode to which a positive potential is applied.

* * * *

To arrive at the proper focal length of a cine lens to give a certain sized picture, divide the width of the screen into the projection "throw," *i.e.*, distance from lens to screen, and the focal length of the required lens will be given in inches.

* * * *

Don't be too sure that those broadcast "pips" do represent the *exact* time, for they may be seconds out. Not that the Greenwich signals are wrong or that there is any undue lag in transmission in the ordinary sense. At certain times of the year it is believed that the moon attracts the sound waves and in turn deflects them back to earth, so that in different places, as has been proved by a series of tests, it is delayed in transit to the extent of several seconds. That the moon is responsible, is beyond doubt.

* * * *

An ordinary film join, no matter how well made, causes an audible click or plop when passing through the sound gate, because the edges of the join overlap distorts the uniformity of the sound track, and produces unnatural noises.

The obvious way to overcome this is by blocking out the overlap on the sound track by painting it over with Movetone Neumade Ink. The blocking out should be of an irregular triangular shape with an apex which is not too sharp. The base should be $\frac{3}{8}$in. to $\frac{1}{2}$in. wide. A fine camel haired brush should be used for the operation, and spoilt attempts should not be remedied by the cutting out of another frame, but by the removal of the ink with Neumade Ink thinner. By the way, the blocking out of the join should be done on the base cellulloid or shiny side and *not* on the emulsion side.

* * * *

The darkening of rooms and halls is usually an expensive matter, but for the purpose of an occasional cinema performance it can be effectively and cheaply carried out by the use of what is commercially termed "pitch" wallpaper. This wallpaper has a white background and is treated with a black pitch coating for use as an undercoat to the final wallpaper covering, and if not stocked by your local merchant, can be ordered through him at a cost of approximately 1*s.* 2*d.* per roll. Each roll measures 36in. by 1ft. 9in.

It is positively non-porous to light, and pinned around windows, one such roll will cover a fairly good area. In sunny weather, any necessary overlaps of the papers on wide windows should be lapped in such a way as to allow any leakage of light to be thrown back toward the projector and *not* the screen. After the show the paper can be removed and rolled up again and stored for further use.

Photo-electric-cells should never be exposed to strong daylight as this considerably shortens their useful life. Usually they have a long life, but when dying, get noisy and harsh, or cause distortion of sound. If ever a blue glow is noticed within the cell, this points to excessive voltage and the manufacturers of the equipment should be informed who will then tell you as to what should be adjusted.

* * * *

Do not hang an electric light near the photo-electric-cell for in this way a hum is picked up through the light frequency falling into the cell. Often this light gets reflected into the cell in all manner of queer ways and the only way to trace whether it *is* reflected light is by excluding all light from the room.

* * * *

Watch those exciter lamps, see that the filaments are perfectly straight and reject any that are not strictly just so. Exciter lamps should be of the pre-focused type, and the filaments should be spring loaded. Modern exciter lamps of the kind described will give well over a hundred hours of useful life.

* * * *

Keep the surface of the exciter lamp clean and polished, too. Many extraneous noises originate from dirt.

* * * *

Keep your fingers off the sound track, for when dirty and greasy they will leave your imprint upon it. Commercial cinema operators at one time could tell who had handled their film previously by the various noises heard in the monitor loudspeakers from the operators' thumb marks.

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